



NEW

HISTORY
WAR

KOREAN WAR

THE DRAMATIC STORY OF DECADES OF CONFLICT



Digital
Edition

FUTURE

THIRD
EDITION

CAUSES & CONSEQUENCES ■ COMMUNISM & JUCHE ■ THE KIM DYNASTY



WELCOME TO KOREAN WAR

The Korean War officially began on 25 June 1950, with the North Korean invasion of the South. But its roots go much deeper and centuries further back than that. Known as '625' in South Korea, the 'Fatherland Liberation War' in the North and the 'War to Resist America and Aid Korea' by the DPRK's Chinese allies, in the West it's more often referred to as the 'Forgotten' or 'Unknown' War, due to its overshadowing by the Second World War on one side and the Vietnam War on the other. But this does a great disservice to those that gave their lives in this internationally important conflict, which still has vital ramifications for the world today. In this bookazine you'll discover the real reasons behind the deadly clashes along the 38th parallel, and explore their political status as proxies for the Cold War. You'll learn about the sacrifices made by hundreds of thousands of soldiers in the 1950s as they sought to gain control of tactical advantage points in the unforgiving, mountainous land, and the ongoing struggle for reconciliation, reunification and rule on the peninsula, which is claiming lives even today. Finally, you'll learn about the rocky path to peace, and the first tentative steps that the belligerents in a war that has become more important now than ever, have been taking along it in recent months.

「FUTURE」

KOREAN WAR

Future PLC Quay House, The Ambury, Bath, BA1 1UA

Editorial

Editor **April Madden**

Designer **Katy Stokes**

Compiled by **Dan Peel & Briony Duguid**

Editorial Director **Jon White**

Senior Art Editor **Andy Downes**

Cover images

Getty

Photography

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Advertising

Media packs are available on request

Commercial Director **Clare Dove**

clare.dove@futurenet.com

International

Head of Print Licensing **Rachel Shaw**

licensing@futurenet.com

Circulation

Head of Newstrade **Tim Mathers**

Production

Head of Production **Mark Constance**

Production Project Manager **Clare Scott**

Advertising Production Manager **Joanne Crosby**

Digital Editions Controller **Jason Hudson**

Production Managers **Keely Miller, Nola Cokely,**

Vivienne Calvert, Fran Twentyman

Management

Chief Content Officer **Aaron Asadi**

Commercial Finance Director **Dan Jotcham**

Head of Art & Design **Greg Whitaker**

Printed by William Gibbons, 26 Planetary Road,
Willenhall, West Midlands, WV13 3XT

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Chief executive **Zillah Byng-Thorne**
Non-executive chairman **Richard Huntingford**
Chief financial officer **Rachel Addison**

Tel +44 (0)1225 442 244



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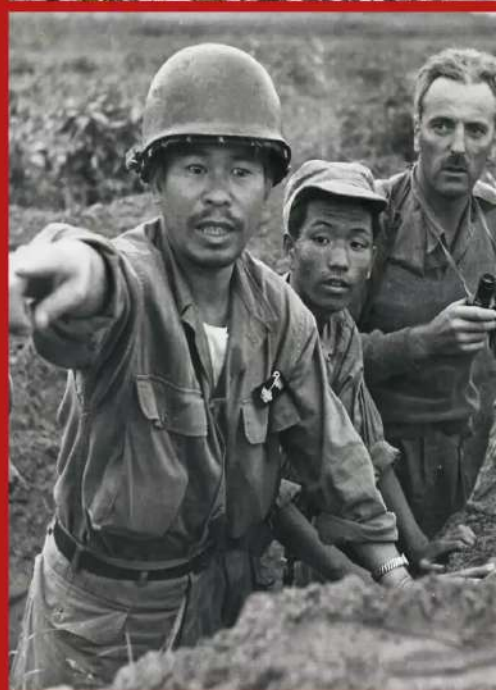
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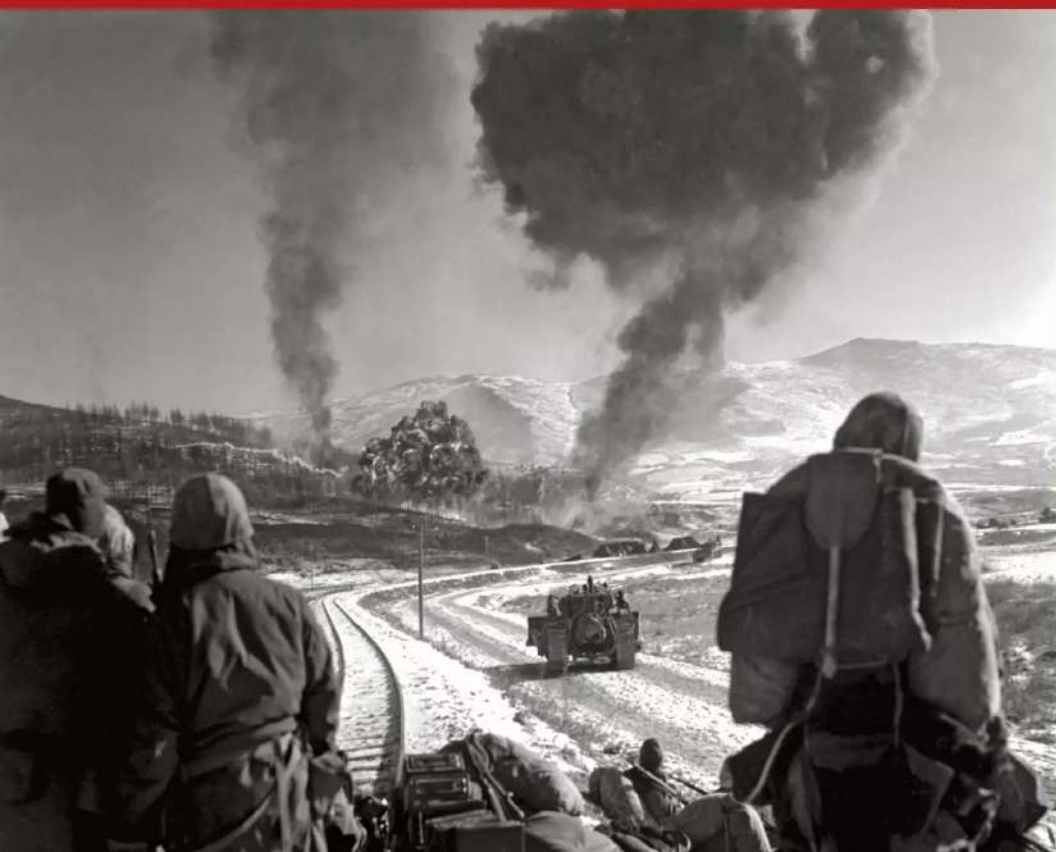
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TIMELINE OF THE... KOREAN WAR 1950-53

PARTITIONED IN 1948, BORDER CLASHES BETWEEN SOVIET-BACKED NORTH KOREA AND US-BACKED SOUTH KOREA WERE FOLLOWED BY A NORTHERN INVASION OF THE SOUTH, PITCHING THE NEWLY FORMED UNITED NATIONS AGAINST COMMUNIST POWERS



■ US Marines use landing craft during the Inchon landings, which relieved pressure on the Pusan Perimeter

INCHON LANDINGS

General MacArthur orders an amphibious invasion of the port city of Inchon while UN forces are besieged in the extreme south east of the peninsula. Two weeks later the pro-American regime of Syngman Rhee is restored in Seoul.

15 SEPTEMBER 1950

25 JUNE 1950

INVASION OF SOUTH KOREA

Armed and trained by the Soviets, the armies of Kim Il-Sung storm across the 38th parallel of latitude. Within one day North Korean tanks reach the suburbs of the South Korean capital, Seoul.



■ A North Korean plaque from 1950, which was hung on doors. It features propagandist phrases such as "Victory is assured!"

27 JUNE 1950

WASHINGTON RESPONDS

President Truman orders US air and sea forces to give support to the forces of Syngman Rhee's Republic of Korea. The UN Security Council calls on member nations to provide support in repelling the North's invasion of the South.

■ US naval forces move from their base in Japan to the Korean peninsula

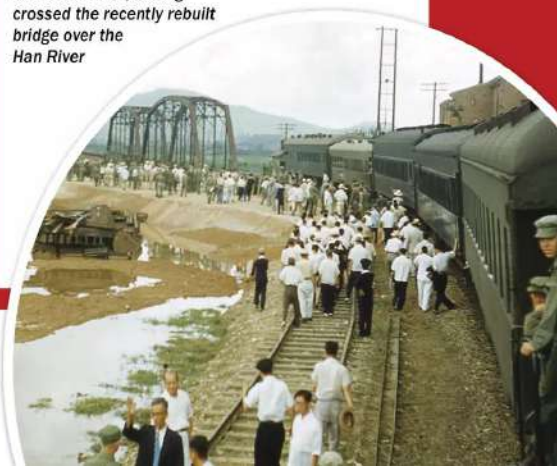


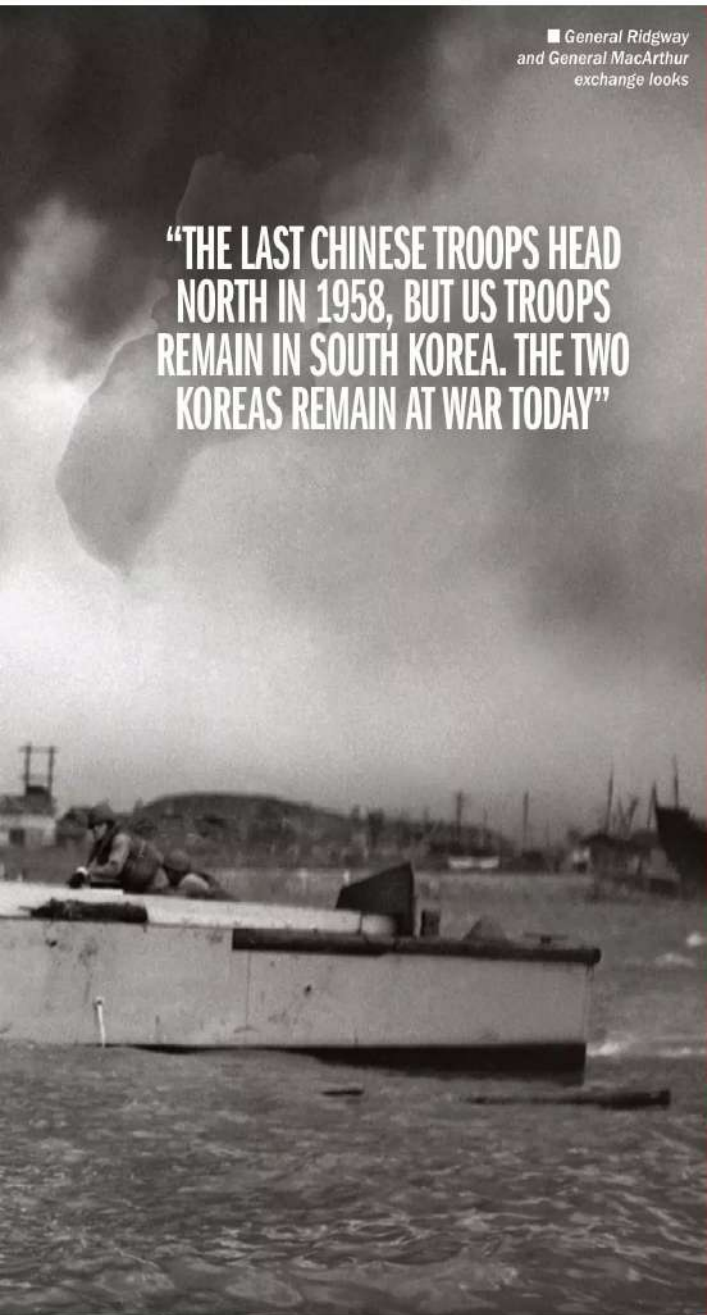
19 OCTOBER 1950

NORTHERN PUSH

American forces, having crossed the 38th parallel, occupy the northern capital of Pyongyang. MacArthur orders a drive towards the Yalu River that divides China from Korea. North Korean armies retreat north.

■ An American army train arrives in Seoul, having crossed the recently rebuilt bridge over the Han River





"THE LAST CHINESE TROOPS HEAD NORTH IN 1958, BUT US TROOPS REMAIN IN SOUTH KOREA. THE TWO KOREAS REMAIN AT WAR TODAY"

■ General Ridgway and General MacArthur exchange looks



MACARTHUR IS DISMISSED

In response to his numerous public statements contradicting the administration's policies regarding war with China and the use of atomic weapons, President Harry Truman dismisses MacArthur and replaces him with General Matthew B. Ridgway.

COMMUNIST COUNTER-OFFENSIVES

As Ridgway's forces hold the line below the parallel, two Chinese offensives fail to reach Seoul. Peace talks begin in the North Korean city of Kaesong in July.

■ High-ranking US and UN military officers pose for photos during peace negotiations



11 APRIL 1951

APRIL-MAY 1951

25 OCTOBER 1950

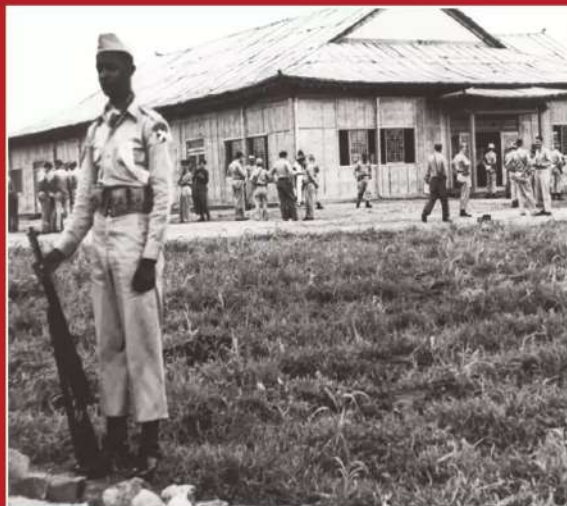
27 JULY 1953

CHINESE INTERVENTION

South Korean troops are decimated by the People's Liberation Army (PLA) of China at Pukchin. One week later the first American and Chinese clash occurs at Unsan, and there are aerial clashes over the Yalu River.



■ Chinese soldiers watch from one of the many bunkers dug during the Korean War



ARMISTICE BUT NOT PEACE

An armistice signed in the village of Panmunjom allows for prisoner exchanges and the cessation of armed operations. The last Chinese troops head north in 1958, but US troops remain in South Korea. The two Koreas remain at war today.

■ UN guards outside the building where the armistice was signed on 27 July 1953

PENINSULA CONFLICT

ARCHAIC TRENCHES, BLONDE BOMBSHELLS, JET FIGHTERS, WWII ARTILLERY, CELEBRITY COMEDIANS AND SOME OF THE MOST DEVASTATING BATTLES OF THE 20TH CENTURY



M-1 CARBINE

UNITED STATES 1942-73

The most produced infantry arm of World War II, this semi-automatic carbine was widely used by American and UN forces until the end of hostilities.

MINESWEEPERS

UNITED STATES, UNITED NATIONS 1950-53

The United States lost five vessels during patrols along the Korean coast. Some skirmishes with North Korean vessels took place in the first weeks of the war but the main danger was from mines and coastal artillery.

PSYCH OPS

UNITED STATES, NORTH KOREA, CHINA 1950-53

Both sides air-dropped propaganda leaflets from aircraft across enemy territory with illustrated propaganda in an attempt to demoralise each other.

DEFECTORS

UNITED STATES/UNITED KINGDOM 1953-C.1980

One British and 20 American POWs refused repatriation via the border town of Panmunjom. Most returned to the West by the early 1960s.

M-1 MORTAR

UNITED STATES C.1942-52

The 81mm (3.2in) artillery piece was in widespread use until mid-1952, when the longer range M-79 mortar replaced it.

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

UNITED STATES 1947-

Based in Seoul, the CIA sent hundreds of expatriate North Koreans across the DMZ, but operations were often sabotaged by double agents.

"NAPALM EXPLODED RAPIDLY AND INFLECTED DREADFUL BURNS. AMERICAN FORCES USED IT EXTENSIVELY IN THE IRON TRIANGLE NORTH OF SEOUL"

NAPALM

UNITED STATES 1944-1980
(BANNED BY INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION)

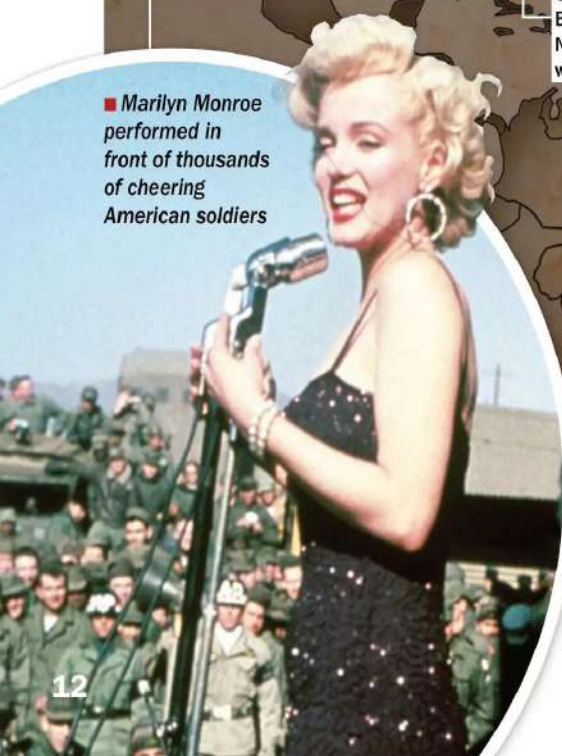
An incendiary weapon made from gelling agents and fuel, napalm exploded rapidly and inflicted dreadful burns. American forces used it extensively in the Iron Triangle north of Seoul.

MARILYN GOES ON TOUR

USA 1954

Marilyn Monroe, the icon of the big screen, toured Korea in January 1954 after the official armistice the previous year, performing at ten shows.

■ Marilyn Monroe performed in front of thousands of cheering American soldiers



GLOSTER METEOR

UNITED KINGDOM 1943-1980S

Designed by Sir Frank Whittle during World War II, the first British jet was used by the Royal Air Force and Royal Australian Air Force in the skies over Korea.

■ The Gloster Meteor was the only Allied jet to see combat in WWII and was deployed to Korea during the Korean War



1 BATTLE OF OSAN 5 JULY 1950

Equipped with superior Soviet tanks and artillery, the North Korean army storms south and overruns Task Force Smith, a force of 400 US Infantry.

2 PUSAN PERIMETER 4 AUGUST-18 SEPTEMBER 1950

A newly arrived UN taskforce battles the North Koreans along a 230-kilometre (143-mile) defensive line.

3 INCHON LANDINGS 15-19 SEPTEMBER 1950

Code-named Operation Chromite, an amphibious assault on the port by the US Marine Corps and X Corps of the army cuts North Korean lines.

4 2ND BATTLE OF SEOUL 22-25 SEPTEMBER 1950

The South Korean capital is recaptured from the North Koreans after bloody house-to-house fighting. Massacres of civilians by South Korean forces occur.

MIKOYAN-GUREVICH (MIG-15) USSR 1949-1953

Chinese MIG-15 fighters first appeared over the Yalu River on 1 November 1950, replacing North Korean propeller aircraft. They battled the American F-86 Sabres throughout the war.

T-34 TANKS

USSR C.1940-1951

A full brigade of North Korean T-34 tanks formed part of the original incursion across the DMZ in June 1950. Most North Korean tanks had been destroyed by early 1951.

TRENCH WARFARE

UNITED NATIONS, NORTH KOREA, CHINA 1950-53

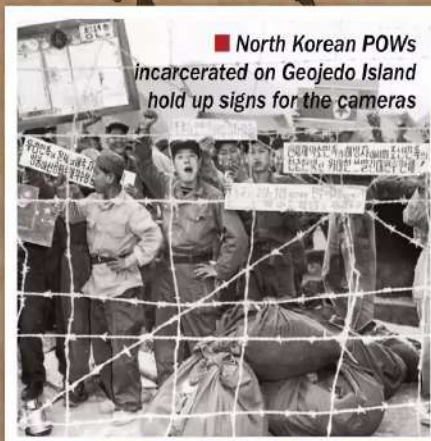
Both sides regularly dug in ahead of the advancing enemy in the early battles, but dugouts and trenches became widespread after May 1951 with the war in stalemate.

"DUGOUTS AND TRENCHES BECAME WIDESPREAD AFTER MAY 1951 WITH THE WAR IN STALEMATE"

BIO WARFARE?

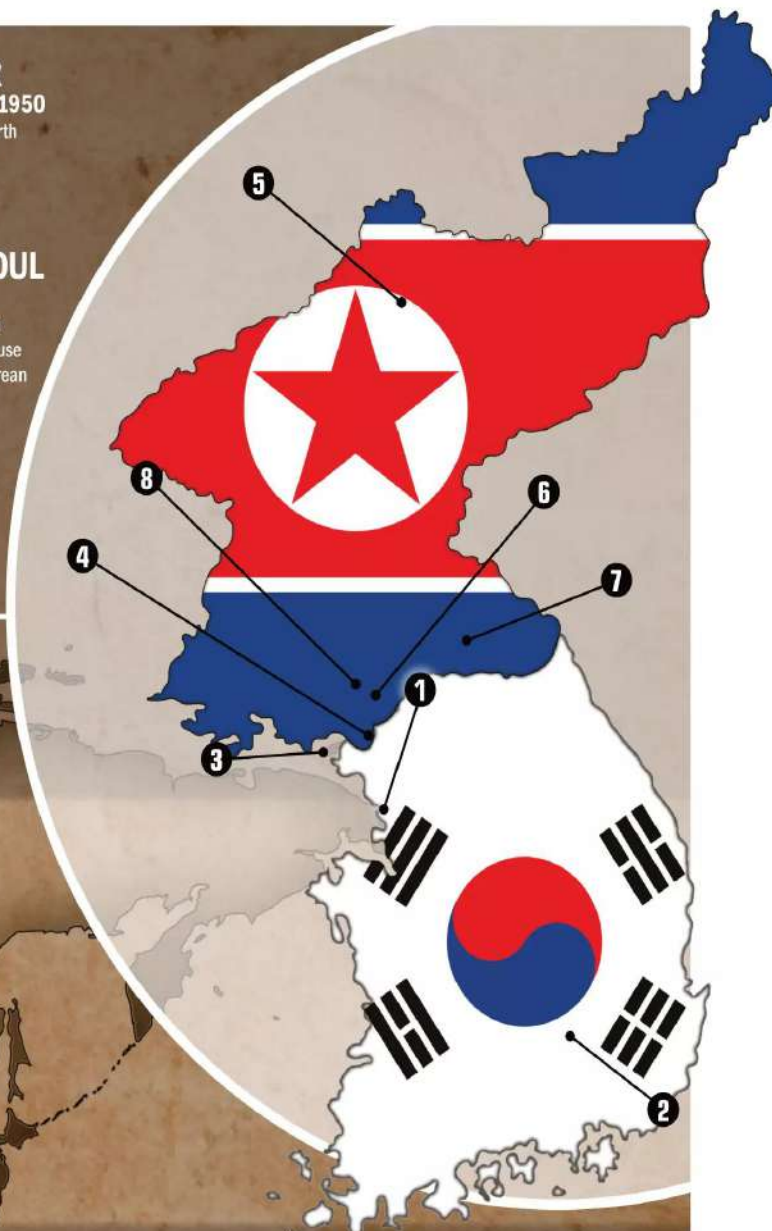
SOUTH KOREA (CHINESE/NORTH KOREA ALLEGATIONS) 1952

An outbreak of cholera near Incheon was attributed by China to the UN forces, an allegation strenuously denied. The North Koreans continue to allege that disease-bearing insects were air dropped north of the DMZ after 1952.



GEJEDO ISLAND CAMP SOUTH KOREA

A prison camp designated mainly for North Korean POWs, the camp held 170,000 prisoners by early 1952. Uprisings in February and April that year killed dozens before being suppressed.



5 CHOSIN BREAKOUT 27 NOVEMBER-13 DECEMBER 1950

China enters the war and clashes with X Corps and US Marines, who manage to break out of a Chinese encirclement and push east to Hungnam Harbour.

6 BATTLE OF KAPYONG 22-25 APRIL 1951

A combined Australian, New Zealand and Canadian force arrests a spring drive by the Chinese and establish a bridgehead to facilitate capturing Seoul.

7 BATTLE OF HEARTBREAK RIDGE SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 1951

A failed offensive by the Chinese and North Koreans to establish control of hill terrain just below the 38th parallel.

8 PANMUNJOM ARMISTICE 27 JULY 1953

An arrangement is made for an armistice but not a permanent peace. This ends major fighting on the peninsula after three years of bloody war.

THE KOREAN CONFLICT

DECADES OF WARFARE, AN INFAMOUSLY OPPRESSIVE REGIME AND THE MOST HEAVILY ARMED BORDER IN THE WORLD – WELCOME TO THE KOREAN PENINSULA

WORDS JACK GRIFFITHS

North Korean international relations are at a low ebb. Military tension between the North and South has risen once again as artillery fire is traded over the demilitarised zone that separates the two nations. The Hermit Kingdom has landed blows in the United States too, with North Korean cyber attacks alleged to have hit American film studios. The situation in the North fluctuates frequently as the country and its leader Kim Jong-un continue to send out mixed messages. Almost completely isolated from the international community, even the UN must tread carefully when engaging in talks on their growing nuclear program and poor human rights record. Meanwhile, South Korea continues to prosper. The hub of many successful technology and automotive companies, its model of society and economy make it the 13th richest country on Earth; a world away from the famines in the aid-reliant North.

For two countries so culturally close to each other, both historically and geographically, the contrast is stark. The story of Yeonmi Park in particular exaggerates the seemingly insurmountable differences between the two nations. She managed to escape her country of origin in 2007 and make her way to South Korea by travelling covertly through China and Mongolia. Her experiences of forced labour camps and summary executions in the country have alerted much of the international community to the conditions in North Korea.

The reason for the vast gulf between the two countries lies in the history of the peninsula. United until 1945, the country was divided by the USA and the USSR, and two separate states were formed, the ROK (Republic of Korea) and the DPRK (Democratic People's

Republic of Korea). The result has been a lack of opportunities for the Korean people to forge their identity and the diluting of a once-rich culture by outside forces. The hostile phase of the Korean War (1950-53) demonstrated just how fractured the country was, but not many could have foreseen just how secluded the North would become. Having only three rulers and one party since the country divided, it is quite unlike anywhere else on Earth, while the South is becoming more and more affluent and integrated into the international community. Here's the story of a very eventful 120 years.

A UNITED KOREA 1894-1945

The roots of the current situation can be traced all the way back to the First Sino-Japanese War. China's stake in Korea was upended after



■ The border between the two nations is the most heavily militarised perimeter in the world and runs over both land and sea



THE KOREAN REGION AT WAR: HOW EVENTS HAVE UNFOLDED

1894-1895

Japan is victorious over China in the First Sino-Japanese War. China ends up losing land and influence in Korea.

1904-1905

The Treaty of Portsmouth ends the Russo-Japanese War and Japan gains full control of Korea.

1910-1945

The Japanese colonial rule over Korea is brutal. They attempt to create a state stamped with their influence and culture.

1945

Korea is divided into two zones after World War Two. The 38th parallel is used as the division boundary.



a sweeping victory by the outnumbered, but much more modernised, Japanese military. The end of Chinese rule initiated a shift in power in south-east Asia as Imperial Japan began dreaming of further conquest into the mainland. The next victim of the Japanese Empire would be the Russians, who were defeated in 'the first great war of the 20th Century', the 1904-1905 Russo-Japanese War. Korea was once again caught in the middle and the Japanese were once again victorious as the Treaty of Portsmouth consolidated Japan's power in Korea and flushed out the Russians. In 1910, Korea was officially annexed by Japan.

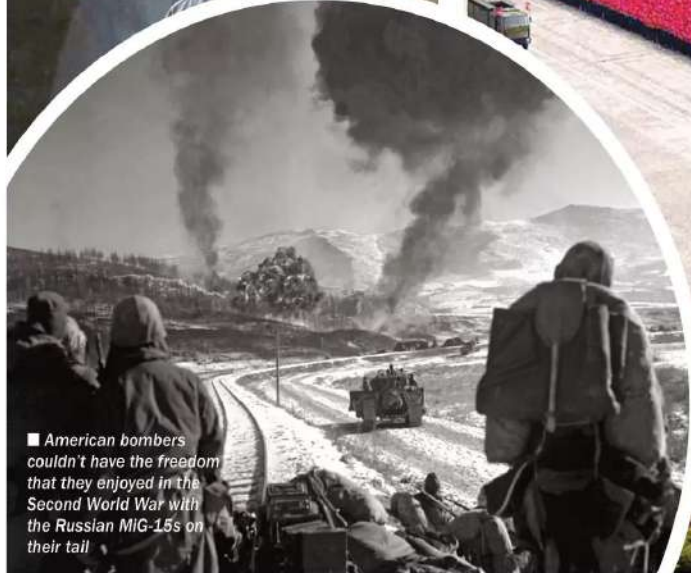
The Japanese occupation of their country did much to antagonise the Korean people and sow the seeds for the hatred and distrust currently felt in the North. Japan ruled with an iron fist. Used as a colony to supply the Japanese with food from the fertile lands of the Hamgyong and Kangwon Provinces, the Koreans were seen as inferior to their Japanese overlords. There was significant urban growth in the country but repressive alien rule ultimately led to unrest. The 'March

First Movement' was a nation-wide peaceful demonstration in 1919 that led the Japanese to execute thousands of Koreans. Despite the spilling of blood, the demonstration loosened Japan's grip with Korean newspapers and even a political party, the Sin'ganhoe (New Korea Society), now allowed. However this freedom was short-lived, as Japan became more confident of its military might and returned to the old, brutal ways. To support the 1931 invasion of Manchuria, the occupying Empire banned the Korean language and demanded that the population adopt Japanese names and the religion of Shintoism in an attempt to expand their culture further. Naturally, this infuriated the Koreans, who saw their national identity being taken away from them. 14 years and two atomic bombs later, the Empire of Japan was no more and Korea was free from its grip. However, with the order of power changing and the Cold War brewing, more struggles lay ahead.

With the defeated Japan out of the picture, Korea now came to the attention of the USSR and USA. With the amount of wars and border changes it had experienced in such a small

period, the region was not far from complete turmoil. Both of the superpowers realised this and acted in the best interests of the area (as well as their own interests, of course). The rise of communism concerned the United States greatly, so it was determined to take as much of Korea as it could away from the Soviet Union. The result was the division of Korea down the 38th parallel line into an American-influenced South and a Soviet-influenced North. The original plan was to unite the two parts of the country after the post-war rebuilding process had been completed. However, as the Cold War began to rear its ugly head, this pipe-dream never came to fruition.

One man who strived to create an independent, united Korea was politician Lyuh Woon-hyung. One of the few who believed in a peaceful resolution to the fragmented country, Lyuh desired for a return to a unified Korea without any external interference; Japanese, Russian, US or otherwise. Unable to please both the far left and far right political parties who were popular in the country at the time, Lyuh was a lone voice. He was assassinated in July 1947 as Korea continued to tear itself



■ American bombers couldn't have the freedom that they enjoyed in the Second World War with the Russian MIG-15s on their tail



- | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|--|--|--|--|
| <p>1948
North Korea is now under Soviet influence and renamed the DPRK. The South is aided by the USA and is now known as the ROK.</p> | <p>1950-1953
The Korean War begins as North Korea invades the South. United Nations respond by sending a multinational force. Three years of fighting follows.</p> | <p>1962
The Third Republic in the ROK, lead by Park Chung-hee, initiates a new era of economic prosperity.</p> | <p>1972
A North-South Joint Communiqué is attempted by both nations but the idea is shelved after no progress was made after a year of planning.</p> | <p>1988
Seoul hosts the 1988 summer Olympics and gradually becomes more and more accepted into the international community.</p> | <p>1991
North and South Korea announce that they have initiated an agreement banning nuclear weapons from the Korean Peninsula.</p> | <p>12 MARCH 1993
The DPRK withdraws from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and begins stockpiling plutonium for its own nuclear research.</p> | <p>29 MAY 1993
The Nodong 1 missile is tested and it is believed to be a chemical or nuclear weapon capable of mid-range strikes.</p> |
|---|---|---|---|--|--|--|--|

apart. A lethal cocktail of extremist left- and right-wing groups and a fragmented society dominated by external interference eventually resulted in war. Continued Soviet and American indecision allowed opposing factions to brew in the south and north of the country. Just as Lyuh had feared, the heart of Korea was being ripped out.

The Korean War began on the 25 June 1950 when North Korean forces, bolstered by Soviet arms and aid, moved south and captured Seoul. It is still not known whether it was a Soviet or North Korean idea to press southwards. The arrival of UN, US and British troops in September repelled the advance as the northern forces were driven back into their lands. The momentum was with the southerners, but this changed with Mao Zedong's introduction of 180,000 Chinese soldiers into the fray. The UN troops were wary of this new threat so stabilised their lines rather than advancing as quickly as they had done previously. The frontline would continue to fluctuate for three years until a stalemate was called on 27 July 1953. The people of Korea knew they would not be waking up to a unified Korea for a long time.



■ Approximately 36,000 US soldiers died in the Korean War as the tensions of the Cold War rose

THE BALANCE OF FORCES ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA

Both Korean states are in the top ten for the largest military forces on Earth. Both are primarily made up of remnants from the Soviet and US eras as the two countries were mechanised during the Cold War. Since then the ROK has maintained a steady military presence while the DPRK has turned to more nuclear measures. On the 19 November 2014 the North threatened to undertake its fourth nuclear test, calling into question the balance of power on the peninsula once again.

■ Processions of raw military power are a common sight in the DPRK as the cult of the leader and one-party state remains strong


























NORTH KOREA

24,457,492

TOTAL
POPULATION

SOUTH KOREA

48,754,657

MAIN BATTLE TANKS	LIGHT TANKS	PERSONNEL CARRIERS	ARTILLERY	ARMY HELICOPTERS	SUBMARINES	MAIN WARSHIPS	PATROL SHIPS/BOATS
							
>3,500 2,414	>560 0	>2,500 2,945	>21,000 >11,038	0 457	72 23	3 28	383 110
MINESWEEPER CRAFT	SUPPORT SHIPS	BOMBER AIRCRAFT	FIGHTER AIRCRAFT	RECON AIRCRAFT	TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT	AIR FORCE HELICOPTERS	DRONE AIRCRAFT
							
24 10	23 24	80 0	>523 462	0 41	217 33	302 >49	0 >103
					TRAINING AIRCRAFT	AMPHIBIOUS ASSAULT SHIPS	NUCLEAR WARHEADS
COMBAT-READY TROOPS	COMBAT-READY PARAMILITARY	RESERVES	PARAMILITARY RESERVES				
1,190,000 655,000	189,000 4,500	600,000 4,500,000	5,700,000 3,000,000		215 193	10 47	12-23 0

FEBRUARY 1994

After being threatened with a trade embargo, North Korea allows the inspection of seven atomic sites. It does however refuse to let them take radioactive samples away.

JUNE 1994

The DPRK states that nuclear inspectors will no longer be allowed in the country as it reportedly begins to make bombs again.

9 JULY 1994

Kim Il-sung dies and his son, Kim Jong-il, becomes leader. The first leader of the DPRK is named as the 'Eternal President of the Republic'.

21 OCTOBER 1994

North Korea again allows inspection of its military sites and factories. Subsequently, the USA agrees to provide fuel oil to the DPRK.

1998

ROK President Kim Dae-jung begins the Sunshine Policy to encourage open relations with North Korea.

2000

ROK President Kim Dae-jung meets with Kim Jong-il in Pyongyang. This is the first meeting between the two warring nations in 50 years.

9 AUGUST 2003

The United States, China, Russia, South Korea and Japan hold new talks with North Korea.

19 SEPTEMBER 2005

North Korea agrees to end its nuclear weapons programme in return for security, economic and energy benefits.

POST-WAR KOREA 1953-1998

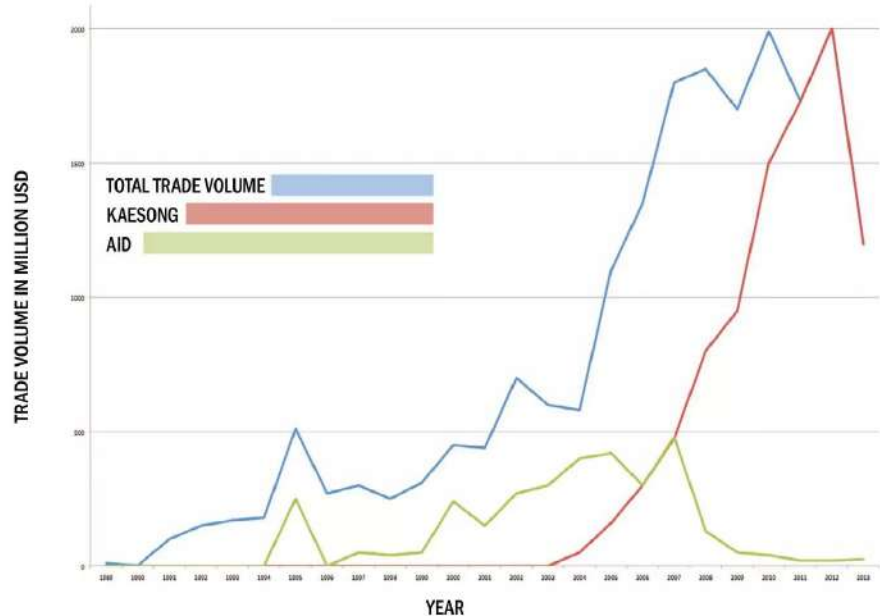
Approximately 3.25 million people lost their lives in the Korean War. The years after the conflict consisted of both sides appealing for international aid to help rebuild their crumbled societies. Kim Il-sung was the leader of the new Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) as the north side of the peninsula began to assume its current form. Kim was the choice of both China and the Soviets to lead North Korea into a new era. Prior to the war, Mao had sent 40,000 communists to North Korea to contribute to the 'nation building' of the new state. After the war, the external aid did not cease as the Soviets helped transform the agricultural DPRK into an industrial nation. From here on out, North Korea would become more and more reclusive. Bolstered by continued Soviet aid, Kim Il-sung's cult of personality grew as the one-party state began to consolidate its power. The state suffered a setback when famine gripped the country in the Seventies and again in the Nineties as the new Russian Federation withdrew its flow of aid. Estimates suggest that one million died as a result of the food shortages.

By 1993, the North began expressing a desire for a nuclear program. On the 12 March, the DPRK withdrew from the worldwide Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and began stockpiling reserves of plutonium. The fears of potential nuclear weapons launches grew in May of that year when it was revealed that the DPRK had been conducting tests on the Nodong 1, a missile that could potentially strike targets in South Korea and Japan. Although, these fears were not confirmed, the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) demanded a search of North Korean atomic sites, to which the DPRK duly obliged. As the year wore on, North Korea became increasingly evasive over its nuclear affairs, sometimes being open about its plans while at other times, concocting secret nuclear operations and threatening other nations. On 8 July 1994, Kim Il-sung died and was replaced by his son, Kim Jong-il.

There were some steps taken towards achieving re-unification by both countries in this period. In 1972, there was talk of a North-South Joint Communiqué after delegates from both nations had held talks about a possible compromise. However this scheme was scrapped after no progress was made after a year of planning and negotiations. Further attempts were made in 1985 and 1990 to no avail. Conversely, there were several events at the other end of the spectrum such as in 1968 when commandos from North Korea got within a mile of the presidential Blue House in Seoul

INTER-KOREAN TRADE

Trade between the two nations has hit various peaks and troughs in the last decades. These economical ups and downs correlate to international events. The sharp rise at the end of the 20th Century demonstrates the success of the Sunshine Policy and the creation of the Kaesong joint industrial region. As relations began to get frosty, so did the trade, as we can see in recent years.



before they were apprehended, while in 1983, DPRK agents attempted, unsuccessfully, to murder the leader of the ROK.

Over on the south side of the peninsula is a country that has debatably suffered to an even greater extent than the North. The UN and USA didn't provide as much direct aid as the USSR had done to North Korea as the ROK came under a series of authoritarian governments. The first post-war leader of the ROK was Syngman Rhee, who led a corrupt regime that did not allow newspapers and restricted free speech. Economic problems and student riots in 1960 motivated the army to stage a coup and he was disposed of in 1961.

The next major stage in the ROK's history was the Third Republic that was led by Park Chung-hee from 1962 until 1979. Politically at least, this was another false dawn for democracy as Park commanded a regime based on martial law. However, despite its repressive nature, the South Korean economy began to boom after a series of successful reforms. This transformation can be considered as the emergence of the modern ROK as education, transportation and industry also

8 OCTOBER 2006

The DPRK becomes the eighth country in history to launch a nuclear weapon as it detonates a nuclear device.

13 FEBRUARY 2007

\$400 million in oil and aid is promised to the DPRK if it starts its promise of demolishing its nuclear facilities.

27 MARCH 2010

A ROK warship, Cheonan, sinks near the border with North Korea. It is believed that a North Korean torpedo caused the disaster. The DPRK denies involvement.

23 NOVEMBER 2010

Shells kill two ROK soldiers as one of the most serious clashes between the sides in decades follows. The two countries blame each other for starting the conflict.

19 DECEMBER 2011

Kim Jong-il dies of a heart attack and is replaced by his son Kim Jong-un. The new ruler shows no sign of softening his approach.



28 FEBRUARY 2013

Kim Jong-un meets with former US basketball player Dennis Rodman in a series of publicity stunts. Rodman declares that he will hold exhibition games in the country.

prospered. This progress was continued by Park's successor Chun Doo-hwan and the country even mustered enough wealth to host the Olympics in 1988. Living standards were continually rising as industry was eventually deregulated and democracy began to shine through. The 1998 election was the first to be done peacefully and democratically, and in the same year the potential re-unification of Korea went one step closer under the 'Sunshine Policy'.

THE MODERN PENINSULA 1998-2018

At the tail end of the millennium, significant process was made for the possible re-unification of Korea. The Sunshine Policy was set up by new ROK president Kim Dae-jung. The result was an inter-Korean economic co-operative development known as Kaesong, the joint industrial zone. The now economically superior South gave rice and fertiliser to the struggling North as a gift of goodwill. ROK businesses were also encouraged to go north in order to create new trade links and economic opportunities within the DPRK.

Further progress was made at the turn of the 21st Century with the first Inter-Korean summit. This was the first ever visit by a South Korean head of state to the DPRK and was an historic summit in the drive to reunite Korea. Kim Jong-il, in particular, was very talkative and open to the ROK representatives at the meeting. The following year, the supreme leader declared the need for new economic thinking if North Korea was to survive in the modern international environment. Economic delegations were welcomed from many countries while teams were also sent abroad for extensive economic co-operation. Rationing was still common in the country but the wheels were in motion for a move to a free market socialist economy.

Relations with the South were at an all time high as both declared for the first time that they had no intention to invade each other. Despite all this development, the US and UN were still very suspicious of the nuclear intentions of the North. There was a growing fear that Kim Jong-il had used the financial support to beef



up his nuclear arsenal rather than the economy and society as promised. As a result, relations between the countries once again soured, with the South resentful of the North's apparent refusal to play ball. Kim Dae-jung was voted out of office in 2003 and replaced with a more hardline conservative government. The 'Nelson Mandela of Asia' had won a Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts, but re-unification was hardly a step closer. The apparent security complex of the DPRK had proved to be its downfall once again. Another summit was called in 2007 and a declaration was signed to promote joint economic, military and family reunion projects. However, within a year, tensions would rise yet again, potentially to the point of no return.

The Sunshine Policy was effectively annulled in 2008 and within two years this seemed like an excellent decision as events took a turn for the worse. On 27 March 2010, the South Korean warship ROKS Cheonan was torpedoed just off the two nations' maritime border. 46 sailors perished and, although it has not assumed responsibility, South Korea and the UN are convinced that the North was to blame. If random strikes like this continue, South Korea will never consider re-unification.

In the international media, 2013 was known as the year of the North Korean crisis. Under

new leader Kim Jong-un, the DPRK boasted that it had an advanced missile system ready to strike both South Korea and the USA. It also advised the evacuation of all the embassies in Pyongyang as the country sought further isolation. Even more significantly, the economic co-operative development that was devised during the Sunshine Policy was 'temporarily suspended' as 53,000 Korean workers stopped working. There were two contrasting responses from the countries involved. The USA decided to undertake a precautionary move and transported missile defence systems to Guam as well as deploying stealth fighters to patrol the peninsula. South Korea on the other hand offered the DPRK \$7.3 million in aid in a last chance offer for their reconciliation.

Skip forward to the end of 2018 and the Korean situation is still as convoluted as it ever has been. Currently, both sides of Korea have active militaries that are among the largest in the world. This is a staggering statistic considering the size of the countries and it is this military tension that continues to hinder any hope of re-unification. Any hope that Kim Jong-un would be an easier nut to crack than his father has rapidly evaporated. Recent developments have seen North Korea come to the table with both its South Korean neighbours and with the United States, but its commitment to peaceful diplomatic relations with nations it views as traitors and war criminals is still up for question. While South Korea revels in a newfound economic prosperity, Kim Jong-un's 'Hermit Kingdom' remains reclusive and mystifying. The two Koreas may have fielded joint teams in the most recent Winter Olympics, but unless the cycle of tension is broken, it could be a long time until we see a truly unified Korea again.

"THE US AND OTHER HOSTILE FORCES, IGNORING OUR MAGNANIMITY AND GOODWILL, ARE VICIOUSLY STEPPING UP THEIR MANOEUVRES IN ORDER TO ANNIHILATE OUR REPUBLIC POLITICALLY, ISOLATE IT ECONOMICALLY AND CRUSH IT MILITARILY" - KIM JONG-UN, 2 APRIL 2014

7 MARCH 2013

New economic sanctions are placed against North Korea after its third nuclear test. The DPRK also threatens a strike against the United States with 'lighter and smaller nukes'.

3 APRIL 2013

The USA deploys an advanced missile defence system in Guam two years ahead of schedule to protect from the potential threat of a North Korean attack.

5 APRIL 2013

A great example of inter-Korean reconciliation is ended after the North withdraws 53,000 workers at Kaesong, an industrial park jointly run with South Korea.

28 JULY 2013

South Korea announces \$7.3 million worth of aid for North Korea. This is followed by "one last round" of talks.

31 MARCH 2014

More conflict as hundreds of artillery shells are fired across the western sea border. This happens a day after the North announced more nuclear tests.

22 NOVEMBER 2014

Sony computer systems are hacked, exposing personal details. North Korea are accused of the hack as *The Interview* is scheduled to be released.

27 DECEMBER 2014

A DPRK army deserter kills four Chinese villagers during a robbery. Tensions rise.

12 JUNE 2018

DPRK leader Kim Jong-un meets with US President Donald Trump at a summit held in Singapore. The two sign a joint statement agreeing to concessions on both sides.

HOW KOREA ENDED UP FIGHTING ITSELF

HAVING SUFFERED UNDER JAPANESE RULE FOR 35 YEARS, KOREA FOUGHT FOR UNITY AND SELF-GOVERNANCE AND FOUND ITSELF MILES APART INSTEAD

WORDS DAVID CROOKES

To understand how and why war broke out in Korea in 1950, it is vitally important to go much further back in time, to the 19th century. For it was then that Korea, an isolationist nation that had been subordinate to the Qing Empire since the fall of the Ming Dynasty, began to open up and modernise to a degree. It led to Korean ports being accessible to Japan under the Treaty of Ganghwa in 1876 and further agreements being signed with the USA, Britain, Germany Russia and France. Yet for one nation in particular, that was not enough – and Korea was about to be dragged into a situation that would change it forever.

For some time, Korea had been a corrupt and weakened state marred by both poverty and peasant rebellion, but the Empire of Japan sought to exert greater influence over the peninsula. It fought and defeated the Qing Empire in 1894 and 1895 in what became known as the First Sino-Japanese War, shifting the East Asian power base to the Land of the Rising Sun. Japan gained more influence over the Korean government and it rattled Gojong, the 26th king of the Joseon dynasty. He quickly sought royal refuge at the Russian legation in Seoul and he proclaimed the Great Korean Empire in 1897. Gojong also became the country's first Emperor, but that was not to last.

This was because Japan was very much on the rise. Between 1904 and 1905, it went to war with the Russian Empire over its imperial ambitions in Manchuria and Korea, and one of the results was the signing of the Japan-Korea Treaty. It stripped Korea of its status as an independent nation and made it a protectorate of Imperial Japan. Gojong, who had agreed to the Treaty only under force, tried to re-assert his authority but it was entirely in vain. In 1910, the pro-Japanese minister of Korea, Ye Wanyong, went on to sign the Japan-Korea Annexation Treaty and, with that, Korea was placed firmly under Japanese colonial rule. This understandably led to bitter resentment.

A flashpoint was the Japanese insistence of replacing Korean culture with their own. They changed the names of Korean public places and people's names to Japanese alternatives, and prohibited local newspapers. They introduced a free public education model based upon their own and looked to teach children how to become Imperial citizens. The history of the Japanese Empire took precedence over Korea and it was forbidden for non-approved texts to be used. Korean was also eventually banned from being spoken in schools and universities, while tens of thousands of cultural artefacts were sent from Korea to Japan. Worse, around 200,000 records of ancient Korean history were burned and destroyed.

GROWING RESENTMENT

Koreans began to feel alienated and angry. Their land was taken away from them by Japanese families while hundreds of thousands of Koreans were forced, through economic circumstance, to work in Japan. Even though economic output in agriculture, industry, fishery and forestry grew during Japanese colonialism thanks to modernisation, Japan was more often than not the beneficiary. The best foods, such as rice, seaweed, livestock and seafood, were enjoyed in Japan, and only the Japanese were able to obtain official government titles. Yet it was expected that Koreans would fight wars for the Japanese. Something had to give.

As a response, the Korea Independence Party was established by Kim Gu in 1928 and resistance groups formed, spreading across the country within a decade. An open display of resentment manifested in the March 1st Movement of 1919 – the year that the former Emperor Gojong died amid speculation that he had been poisoned. The movement began at the Taehwagwan Restaurant in Seoul where the Korean Declaration of Independence was read aloud and there were demonstrations in the streets involving some 2 million people. Far

“THE JAPANESE SOUGHT TO REPLACE KOREAN CULTURE WITH THEIR OWN”



YOU ARE NOW CROSSING
 38TH PARALLEL
 US COB 728MP

DECLARING WAR ON JAPAN

During Japan's annexation of Korea and in the wake of the March 1st movement, anti-colonialists formed the Korean Provisional Government and initially based themselves in Shanghai, China. It was financially and militarily supported by the Soviet Union, France and the Kuomintang of China, and it coordinated resistance attacks on the Japanese imperial army during the 1920s and 1930s.

Among the work carried out was an ambush of the Japanese military leadership in Shanghai on 29 April 1932 in which the commander of the Japanese Army and Navy died. There was also an attempt on the Japanese emperor Hirohito's life, but the hoped-for assassination using a hand grenade thrown by Korean independence

activist Lee Bong-chang on 9 January 1932 was unsuccessful.

On 9 December 1941, and in the wake of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the government-in-exile – led by the Korean nationalist politician Kim Gu – declared war on Japan. When the war ended and Japan was defeated, Gu returned to Korea and he became a reunification activist, seeking to bring the divided nation back under a single power.

The provisional government, however, was dissolved in 1948 and Gu, who had opposed Korea being placed into a trusteeship, died a year later. The way was paved for Kim Il-sung to unite the peninsula in his own way – and he tried to do so in 1950.



■ Kim Gu had devoted more than 20 years of his life to Korean independence following the annexation by Japan

THE COMFORT WOMEN OF KOREA

During the 13 years between 1932 and 1945, many Korean women were forced to become prostitutes for Japanese military men. They were rounded up in the streets and abducted from their homes. Some were promised well-paid work or a decent education before being whisked away to so-called 'comfort stations' far away from their families.

It's not known exactly how many women were involved but estimates go as high as 410,000 when sex slaves from other occupied countries such as China and the Philippines are included. The Japanese referred to them as "ianfu" or "comfort women" and they were treated appallingly in the most inhumane of conditions.

Aside from being raped, many of the women – some of whom were as young as 16 and 17 – suffered sexually transmitted diseases. They were also left without adequate medical care, certainly during the Second World War when supplies became scarce and a number turned to addictive drugs such as opium in order to cope. Some women became pregnant while others suffered great pain. Worse, some 90 per cent of the women failed to survive the Second World War, such was their terrible ordeal.

And yet for so long, the issue was kept out of the limelight, even though it provided another reason for the resentment many



■ A statue symbolising the comfort women is positioned facing the Japanese Embassy in Seoul, South Korea

Koreans felt against their Japanese rulers. The big problem was that women who did survive felt ashamed and did not speak out, and when they did, Japanese officials denied anything had happened. Eventually, however, more and more women came forward with their testimonies and Japan's government admitted the crimes in 1993.

from being a flash in the pan, they continued for a year in the face of violent military-led suppression and several thousand were killed. Some demonstrators were publicly executed.

The fierce reaction from the Japanese forced resistance leaders to flee to Manchuria and Shanghai, working from afar to influence matters back home. One particular battle – that of Qingshanli – took place over six days in October 1920 between Korean resistance fighters and the Imperial Japanese Army. In each case, Japan was able to maintain its grip on Korea while fighting other wars, notably the invasion of Manchuria in 1931 and the establishment of the puppet state of Manchukuo in 1932.

A motivating factor in Japan's desire for expansion were the sanctions imposed by the USA, prompting Japan to seek more territory in pursuit of oil and metal. This led to the Second Sino-Japanese War between the Republic of China and the Empire of Japan, which raged from 1937 to 1945. About three years into that conflict, however, Japan made another, ultimately deadly, move.

ATTACK ON PEARL HARBOR

On 7 December 1941, Japan mounted a surprise military attack on Pearl Harbor, forcing the US into the Second World War. It had hoped the attack would deter America from interfering in its proposed military incursions within Southeast Asia, but the following day, President Franklin D Roosevelt signed a declaration of war and the plan had seemingly



THE PATH TO WAR

"AN OPEN DISPLAY OF RESENTMENT MANIFESTED IN THE MARCH 1ST MOVEMENT OF 1919"

DEFINING MOMENT KOREAN EMPEROR UNDER PRESSURE SEPTEMBER 1905

Since 1863, Gojong had been the king of Joseon – a Korean dynastic kingdom that had been in existence for around 500 years. When tensions flared between Japan and the Qing Empire (Korea having long entered the imperial Chinese tributary system), he came under great pressure. Gojong fled to the Russian legation in Seoul from where he governed in 1896, proclaiming the Korean Empire a year later. But in 1905, with Japanese troops encircling the Korean imperial palace, he was forced to sign the Japan-Korea Treaty. Now Japan ruled the country's foreign affairs and all of its ports.



FIRST SINO-JAPANESE WAR

A desperately modernising Japan – with its eye fixed firmly on trying to learn from and put itself on a par with the Western world – swings the balance of Eastern power away from the Qing Empire following a war which lasts until 17 April 1895.

25 JULY 1894

CHINA RENOUNCES CLAIM

In the Treaty of Shimonoseki that was signed following the war, China recognises Korea's full independence and autonomy and thereby renounces any claim it has over the country. It effectively gives Japan a clear path towards making a claim of its own.

17 APRIL 1895

JAPANESE STATESMAN ASSASSINATED

A good number of Koreans opposed Japan's influence: when Ito Hirobumi, the Japanese Resident-General of Korea arrived at Harbin Railway Station in China, he was shot dead by Korean nationalist An Jung-geun.

26 OCTOBER 1909

ANNEXATION OF KOREAN EMPIRE

Korea is formally annexed by Japan in the Japan-Korea Treaty of 1910. Article one states: "His Majesty the Emperor of Korea makes the complete and permanent cession to His Majesty the Emperor of Japan of all rights of sovereignty over the whole of Korea."

22 AUGUST 1910

backfired. For four years, the US and Japan battled against each other, but the turning point came in 1945, when the US planned a final defeat of the Japanese and asked the Soviet Union for help.

The American plan was for Joseph Stalin's forces to attack Manchuria and prevent the Japanese troops they encountered from heading back to Japan while the US made its incursion. In return, Stalin wanted some of Japan's territory, namely southern Sakhalin, the Kurile Islands and a presence in Manchuria. On 6 August 1945, however, the US detonated a devastating nuclear weapon over the Japanese city of Hiroshima and followed it with another over Nagasaki three days later. With Japanese surrender imminent, it meant the Soviets were not needed any more, but Stalin's army nevertheless made its way through Manchuria and Korea with relative ease.

This advancement was crucial since it allowed the Soviets to gain a share of the spoils, as agreed with the US. The Americans, however, were worried that the Soviet Army would continue south and eventually take the whole peninsula. In an attempt to prevent Stalin from doing so, Washington hastily proposed drawing a line along the 38th parallel of Korea, dividing the country in two.

Under this agreement, the Soviet Union was allowed to administer the North and the United States gained control of the South. And yet it also produced a pair of lopsided countries: the North ended up with raw materials such as coal, and the northern ports of Chongjin and Wonsan, but had little natural land for food, while the South had access to an abundance of rice but scant means to produce electricity. Nevertheless, it was an arrangement they had to work with, since the Soviet Union was in no mood for further negotiation.

■ About 80,000 Koreans gather at Seoul stadium in South Korea 1948 to commemorate Korea's 1919 Declaration of Independence from Japan



The Soviets started planning immediately, installing the Korean guerilla fighter-cum-Russian military man Kim Il-sung as head of the regime in light of there being few other candidates. Stalin also agreed to create the North Korean People's Army as it cemented its iron grip on what was fast becoming a northern communist regime. In contrast, the South was being built in the capitalist image of the United States. Rising tensions were inevitable, particularly so as the Cold War between the two superpowers began in earnest.

There were threats of invasion on both sides. The anti-communist dictator Syngman Rhee, who was leading South Korea and dearly wanted to reunite the country, had to be restrained by Washington from heading north with an army. Meanwhile, Kim was telling Stalin that the South Koreans were about to attack,

asking permission to send his own troops southward. Kim promised Stalin that he would only invade if North Korea was attacked, and he was convinced the United States would not intervene if he did. In response, the Soviet Union urged Kim to wait until he had a strong enough army but it agreed to an invasion in principle.

When the United States pulled its combat troops out of Korea in 1949 and stated that it would not be able to guarantee the defence of South Korea, it appeared to be all Kim needed. On 25 June 1950, North Korea – backed by the Soviet Union and China – pushed past the 38th parallel. With Japan well and truly out of the way, a chance to unite Korea as one and a desire to expand communism in the Far East, what became a very bloody war between North and South was very much on.

DEFINING MOMENT

SAITO MAKOTO BECOMES GOVERNOR SEPTEMBER 1919

Korea was being ruled by a Governor-General of Korea and it was his job to steer the colony's immediate future. Saito Makoto followed Terauchi Masatake and Hasegawa Yoshimichi as the third person to assume the role and he shifted from a military policy to a cultural one. He sought to manage the multiethnic state while continuing to keep a distinct distance between the colonisers and those who were colonised. This entailed the maintenance of public peace, the spread of education, the promotion of local rule, the improvement of health and the development of industry and transportation.



DEFINING MOMENT

DIVISION OF KOREA AUGUST 1945

Following victory in the Second World War, the US and the Soviet Union divided Korea across the 38th parallel. The Soviets created a communist regime to the north while the Americans supported the formation of a military capitalist-leaning government in the South. The split caused significant movement, with a good number of middle class, anti-communist Koreans migrating to the south. Soon after, the Soviets sought to install Kim Il-sung as the leader of North Korea and he quickly expressed his desire to unite the peninsula, by Soviet-backed forces if that was necessary.

JUNE 10TH MOVEMENT

The March 1st Movement had already made its anti-Japanese sentiment clear, but it continued to raise its head seven years later with another mass independence demonstration. Kwon O-sol was sent to Korea from Shanghai by the Communist Party to lead it.

10 JUNE 1926

ELECTIONS ARE HELD

The United Nations supervised the Constitutional Assembly elections in South Korea which saw 95.5 per cent of voters turnout. It prompted the creation of a capitalist government in Seoul in 1948 led by Syngman Rhee.

10 MAY 1948

MURDER OF KIM GU

Kim Gu was a Korean independence activist who was opposed to a South Korean state and desired unity. South Korean army lieutenant Ahn Doo-hee shot him four times at his home, believing him to be a Soviet agent.

26 JUNE 1949

KOREAN WAR BEGINS

Kim Il-sung ordered an invasion of South Korea, forcing the US into a war to defend it. The conflict raged for three years, ending on 27 July 1953 when an armistice was signed.

25 JUNE 1950

Images: Wiki, Getty



POLITICS

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Meet North Korea's ruling Kim dynasty, communism's only hereditary rulers

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Find out how DPRK founder Kim Il-sung seized rulership and influence

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Discover how Kim Il-sung's son consolidated power, wealth and control

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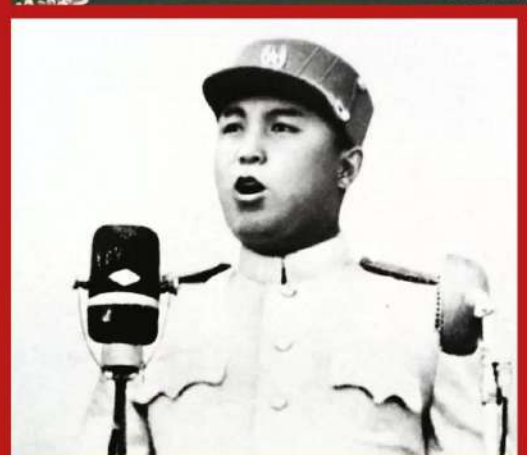
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Explore the uniquely Korean form of communism practiced by the Kim dynasty

52 CLASH OF KOREAS

Take an in-depth look at the post-1953 flashpoints between the two nations





COMMUNISM ACROSS HISTORY



■ Plato believed that those in power should have reason and wisdom

THE GREEKS DID IT FIRST ANCIENT GREECE 380 BCE

The first person to formally explore the concept of a classless society was Plato. In *The Republic*, Plato describes his concept of an ideal city, which has remarkable similarities to communism. In this ideal state, people share all their property, wives and children; nothing remains private and everything is shared with everyone else. However, contemporary communism is more economic, while Plato's ideal communist state is largely spiritual, and he writes that it should only be practised by some classes of society.

THE MAZDAK MOVEMENT

PERSIA 5TH CENTURY

Emerging in the height of economic and political crisis, the Mazdak movement aimed to deprive aristocrats and priests of their power. The Mazdakites, supported by Kawadh I who had been overthrown by the nobility, seized the private property of the elite and redistributed it to the poor. Crushed by 520, although the movement was short-lived it was one of the earliest instances of a communist-like movement striving for a free society for all.



■ Mazdak himself, the leader of the movement, claimed to be a prophet of Ahura Mazda, a divine spirit of the old Iranian religion

COMMUNISM TIMELINE

THE OPPRESSED RISE UP

The Thracian gladiator Spartacus leads a slave rebellion against the slave owners and Roman nobility. 73-71 BCE



A depiction of Spartacus' slave rebellion

NOT SO HARMONIC

Robert Owen sets up New Harmony in Indiana to create a utopian communal society, but it is an economic disaster. 1825

TEAMWORK ACROSS THE US

The teachings of French philosopher Charles Fourier encourage his followers to set up a host of communal settlements across the US. 1844

A DIFFERENT KIND OF REVOLUTION

The Industrial Revolution creates a new class of factory workers who are treated badly by their superiors, prompting criticism by figures such as Karl Marx. 1848

NO MORE STALLING

After Lenin's death, Joseph Stalin becomes leader of the Soviet Union. He focuses on rapid industrialisation, a centralised state and presses the authority of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union above all other communist parties worldwide. 1924



Stalin and his purges were responsible for approximately 40 million deaths



Utopia was not translated to English and published until 1551, after More's execution

A MORE EQUAL SOCIETY

Thomas More publishes *Utopia*, which depicts an island society where there is no private property and all food is stored in warehouses to share equally. 1516

FRENCH REVOLUTION

The French Revolution, although sharing different ideologies to socialism, throws the world into a state of upheaval that allows the emergence of communism and socialism. 1789



The French Revolution sparked the emergence of socialism

COMINTERN

The Communist International is set up by the Bolshevik Russian government. Its focus is to overthrow the "international bourgeoisie" and for the creation of an international Soviet republic. 1919-1943

THE SICKLE IS BLUNTED

Communist revolutions and revolts across Europe, most notably in Italy and Germany, are crushed by their governments. 1921-1923

COMMUNISM SPREADS

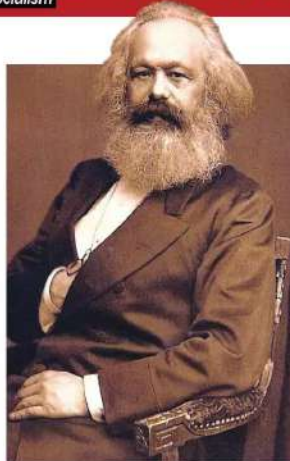
The USSR occupies Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania, imprisoning the presidents of the former two and establishing puppet communist governments. 1940



■ Diggers received their name due to their wish to farm on common land

DIGGING FOR JUSTICE ENGLAND 1649

In 1649 Cromwell had just won the First English Civil War, but hadn't reached a settlement with the king, prompting many nonconformist groups to emerge. The Diggers were one of these groups; they wished to abolish private ownership of land and encouraged the creation of rural communities where all residents are equal. Many members of the nobility were furiously opposed to this and several Lords of the Manor drove them from the land and into obscurity.



■ Marx was exiled from Paris and moved to London in 1849

MAKING HIS MARX FRANCE & BRITAIN 1818-1883

Undoubtedly the most influential name in the history of communism, Karl Marx was a philosopher who wrote the theory of communism most recognised today. Marx began spreading his ideas by writing for a variety of radical newspapers, where he published his belief that the working class were a revolutionary force that could be used to bring a final global revolution. His most notable book – *The Communist Manifesto*, written with Friedrich Engels – influenced a host of communist revolutionaries worldwide from Vladimir Lenin to Fidel Castro.

THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

RUSSIA 1917

Months after the February Revolution, which saw the Russian Tsarist authority overthrown and replaced by a provisional government, Vladimir Lenin and his Bolshevik Party led a second revolution. Although government guards had been ordered to guard specific strategic points of Petrograd, they soon fled when faced with Lenin's men. Early in the morning of 26 October the Winter Palace was infiltrated and what remained of the government were arrested. Lenin was elected as head of government and began to nationalise the estates and crown lands. The success of the Bolshevik cause marked the first communist government in Russia, and would prompt similar revolutions and the spread of communism across the world.



■ The red commonly associated with communism is believed to represent the blood of the workers



■ Around 2.5 million Koreans were killed or wounded during the war

THE KOREAN WAR

NORTH AND SOUTH KOREA 1950-1953

At the close of World War II Korea was divided into two, with the South supported by the US and the North supported by China and the Soviet Union. The North's invasion into the South was thwarted by the US who forced the North Koreans almost to the Soviet border. China's entry into the war established the prewar boundaries, but the entire conflict sent tensions between the nations sky-high.

THE IRON CURTAIN IS DRAWN

After the end of WWII, Stalin creates a divide between East and West Europe by setting up communist supporting governments in Poland, Romania, Hungary and many more Eastern European countries. **1945-1991**



The division of Europe in the Cold War

THE VIETNAM WAR

The communist North Vietnam and the US-supported South Vietnam engage in a brutal war. As a result, the US is forced to withdraw and Vietnam is united under communist rule. **1955-1975**

STIRRINGS OF DISCONTENT

The Hungarian Revolution challenges Stalin's control of Eastern Europe. Although the revolutionaries are defeated, the violent Soviet actions lead to large losses in Communist Party membership. **1956**



About 3,000 citizens were killed in the Hungarian uprising

THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION

In an effort to preserve 'true' communist ideology, Mao Zedong of China purges the country of any capitalist elements, leading to mass executions of officials. **1966-1976**

COMMUNISM IN AFRICA

Communism sets roots in Africa when Ethiopia's Emperor Selassie is overthrown and replaced with the communist Derg. **1974**

TRUMAN DOCTRINE

President Harry Truman introduces a policy aiming to prevent the spread of communism by offering military and economic aid to any nation subject to communist influence. **1947**

RED SCARE

Americans, terrified the spread of communism will infiltrate the USA, begin an investigation of the allegiance of federal employees. This leads to prosecutions and executions. **1947-1950s**

THE BERLIN AIRLIFT

In an effort to force them out of the city, the Soviet Union blocks the western Allies' access to occupied Berlin. The Allies respond by supplying their sections of the city from the air. **1948**



The planes involved in the Berlin Airlift flew over 200,000 flights in one year

THE BERLIN WALL

The communist East German government commissions a wall that separates East and West Berlin in an effort to strengthen socialist East Germany from West Germany. **'fascists.' 1961**

ANOTHER BLOW FOR AMERICA

Salvador Allende becomes the first Marxist to become president of a Latin-American country - Chile - through open elections. This is deemed a disaster by the United States. **1970**



Salvador Allende

COMMUNISM IN CHINA

THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA 1945-1976

Following World War II Mao Zedong led the Communist Party of China to establish the People's Republic of China. Initially inspired by Stalin's rapid industrialisation of the Soviet Union, Mao aimed to transform China from an agricultural economy to an industrial one. However, after Stalin's death, relations with the Soviet Union dramatically worsened, as Mao believed the new government had betrayed the ideas of Marxism and Leninism. This soured relationship led to a worldwide split of communism into two adverse camps.



■ Mao encouraged a destruction of the old world and forging of a new one



■ The Romanian Revolution resulted in the execution of communist leader Nicolae Ceaușescu

COMMUNISM FALLS

EASTERN AND CENTRAL EUROPE 1989

First beginning in Poland in 1989, the following three years saw a revolutionary wave rush over the communist states in Central and East Europe, leading to the fall of Russian communism. Almost all of these revolutions were peaceful and used campaigns of civil resistance to eliminate one-party rule. The dissolution of the Soviet Union led 15 countries to declare their independence and a mass abandonment of communism in Yugoslavia, Italy, Romania and even Ethiopia and Mongolia. Many historians mark this period as the end of the Cold War.



THE HOUSE OF KIM

IN ITS 70 YEARS OF EXISTENCE, THE RECLUSIVE DICTATORSHIP OF NORTH KOREA HAS HAD ONLY THREE LEADERS — ALL FROM THE SAME FAMILY



WORDS PAUL FRENCH

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), or simply North Korea, was founded in 1948 as a communist state and sponsored by the Soviet Union, who controlled the northern portion of the Korean peninsula after World War II. The American-controlled south saw the formation of the Republic of Korea.

The North, seeking to unify Korea under a one-party Marxist-Leninist government, invaded the South in June 1950. A brutal fratricidal war between the North and South waged for three years until an eventual armistice was achieved, though the war between the Koreans never officially ended.

Instead, the peninsula was divided in half by a 250-kilometre (160-mile) long Demilitarised Zone (DMZ). Despite its name, both sides of the DMZ are heavily fortified and the no-man's-land is laden with landmines.

Since then, the North has retreated into total isolation. Its prewar premier, Kim Il-sung, developed a cult of personality as he consolidated his power for both himself and his family, effectively establishing what has become the world's only communist monarchy. Officially, Kim Il-sung is the eternal president of the country, but when he died nearly a quarter of a century ago, the crown passed to his son, Kim 'Dear Leader' Jong-il. In turn, Jong-il's son, Kim Jong-un,

has ruled the rogue state since 2016. The extended Kim family controls most aspects of life in the North, with top jobs in the ruling Korean Workers' Party, running the economy and leading the army. Now that North Korea claims it has developed nuclear weapons, it will undoubtedly be a Kim who has their finger on the button.

Though the official propaganda may portray the family and its three Supreme Leaders in a glowing light, the Kim dynasty and its two successions have been built on rumours and lies, while their consolidations have seen bitter and deadly battles erupt, leaving a trail of bodies that continues to this day.

KIM IL-SUNG: THE ETERNAL PRESIDENT

The obfuscation over the origins and true biographies of the Kim dynasty begin with its founder, Kim Il-sung. Most agree on his birthday, 15 April 1912 (coincidentally the day the Titanic sank), and it is now an annual public holiday in the DPRK, known as the Day of the Sun because 'Il-sung' translates to 'become the sun'. But how did this man rise to become the North's immortal leader of a totalitarian system so all-encompassing that his son and grandson have gone on to take charge of North Korea's 26 million people seemingly — to the North Korean people, at least — without any contest at all?

Kim Il-sung's origin myth lies deep in the forests of Manchuria close to the Chinese border. A year before he was born, Japan had colonised all of Korea and later, in 1932, annexed Manchuria as a colony, too. Indeed, Il-sung largely grew up in Manchuria in what is today's Chinese Jilin province. His family was part of the anti-Japanese resistance, but not the humble peasants of later myth — they were skilled pharmacists. During the Second Sino-Japanese War, which began in 1937, Il-sung led a band of possibly as many as 200 Korean resistance fighters. Though of course later lionised as heroic fighters, it seems they actually spent most of the war isolated and living off the land as best they could.

In December 1941, China became part of the much greater Allied war effort as the Americans and Soviets joined the battle against Japan. This was to change Il-sung's fortunes as his motley band of ill-trained rebels was absorbed into far more highly trained, equipped and politically educated Soviet Red Army partisan training camps. Here, he met a fellow guerrilla and Korean anti-Japanese activist Kim Jong-suk. They married and had two sons — the eldest, Kim Jong-il, was born in 1941, though the fact of his birth being in either China or the Soviet Union is never officially mentioned in the North's propaganda.

His time spent working with the Red Army, organising regular hit-and-run raids against Japanese forces, was key to Il-sung's political development. He became a close student of Soviet communism, particularly of Stalinism, and moved from being an anti-colonial freedom fighter to a hardcore communist.

He also applied the outlook and tactics of the guerrilla fighter to all his endeavours — not just fighting the Japanese, but also in how he began to organise for an independent, socialist Korea. Il-sung was such a good student of communism, that Lavrenti Beria, Deputy Premier of the Soviet Union, recommended that he be their proxy in Korea. The Hot War was ending and the Cold War about to begin — the Russians were determined that their chosen man would be the post-war leader of a unified Korea and ensure the Americans had no influence on the peninsula.

In 1945, the Japanese surrendered and Korea was divided into Soviet and American controlled halves. The North, under Kim Il-sung but with guidance and permission from Moscow, launched an attack on the South in



■ Il-sung fostered a cult of personality around himself



■ A typical example of the sort of propaganda that is still common in the North, celebrating the first supreme leader, Kim Il-sung



■ Kim Jong-il is still used in propaganda long after his death

1950 and three bitter years of war followed until the armistice and the formal division of the peninsula. Retreating into his new domain — north of the 38th parallel and south of the Yalu River border with China — Il-sung got to work on his two most immediate tasks: destroying his enemies within the fledgling DPRK and building his own personality cult. Both activities were to become family businesses.

Il-sung quickly turned his attention to consolidation — for a Supreme Leader to be truly supreme there could be no opposition. With help from Moscow, he immediately organised Soviet-style show trials for anyone who challenged him for leadership of the North and those who had been guerrilla fighters

in the war. Il-sung had to be the only leader, the undisputed anti-Japanese fighter and uncontested head of the Workers' Party. It was a time of dictators — even though Stalin was recently dead in neighbouring Russia, Chairman Mao was assembling his own personality cult in China, too.

But Kim saw himself as greater than Mao or any Soviet leader. He refused to subordinate himself to either the Soviet Union or the newly founded People's Republic of China. He forged his own third way and created his own variant on Marxism — Juche theory — with himself as the only theoretician.

Juche combined Leninism with a little Maoism, a dose of Confucianism and some



■ The first Supreme Leader is known in North Korea as the eternal president

traditional Korean philosophy all thrown into the ideological pot. Marxism may have positioned him on the red side of the Cold War, but it was the Confucian elements of Juche that laid the groundwork for his communist monarchy. Confucianism advocated filial piety towards the father and the family — in the DPRK's case, towards the father of the nation and the first family of the one-party state: Il-sung and the Kim clan.

The Supreme Leader was in total charge of the country, his enemies slain, those who knew his true origins purged. The economy might be collapsing and the people starving, but he smiled upon them with benevolence with his eldest son at his side.

THE LEAST FREE STATE ON EARTH



POSSESSION OF UNAUTHORISED INFORMATION FROM OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY

Being found with anything from outside the DPRK, like DVDs, books, magazines and USB sticks of TV programmes, carries harsh punishments, including imprisonment. South Korean materials are the most closely monitored.

ESCAPING AND SEEKING REFUGE OVERSEAS

It is a crime to try to leave the country and seek refuge elsewhere. Punishments fluctuate but have included execution at times. Most refugees flee across the Yalu River to China hoping to eventually get to South Korea.



ORGANISED POLITICAL OPPOSITION IS BANNED

All organised political opposition is outlawed, including all alternative political parties, any factions within the ruling Korean Workers' Party or even ad hoc movements.

INDEPENDENT MEDIA IS ILLEGAL

Pyeongyang retains complete control of the media — TV, radio, newspapers and all publications, as well as the highly limited internet access a few high-ranking people are allowed.



NO INDEPENDENT FREE TRADE UNIONS

As with China next door, all trade unions in the DPRK are state sanctioned and under the control of the Workers' Party. This, the leadership hopes, will stop any version of Poland's Solidarity movement in North Korea.

NO UNAUTHORISED FREE MARKET ACTIVITIES

Except for a few occasional highly regulated farmers' markets that come and go, all free market activities — such as the buying and selling of food, clothing, cars or property — are banned.



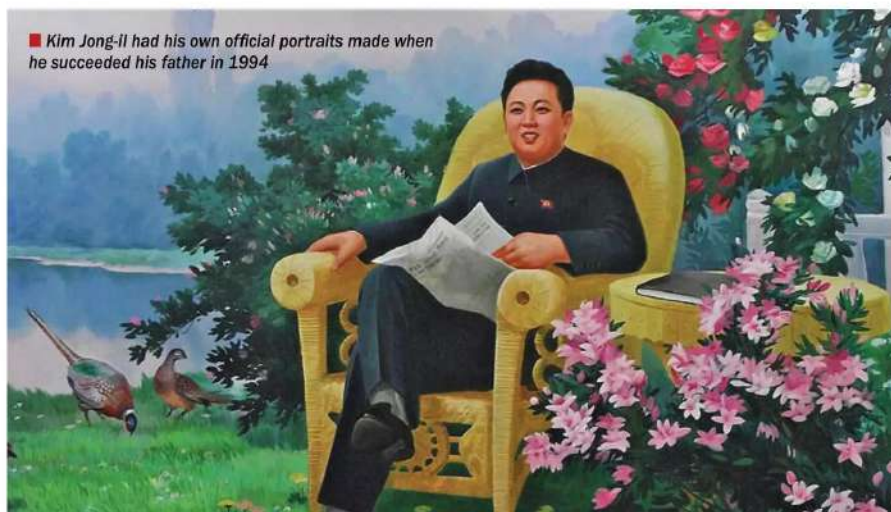
NO RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Though the state has created 'Potemkin' churches to show visitors, in reality there is no religious freedom whatsoever in North Korea according to Human Rights Watch.

THE SONGBUN SYSTEM

This system affects everyone's employment, residence and schooling, as it is the country's socio-political classification scheme that groups people into loyal, wavering or hostile classes. Climbing up the social ladder is almost unheard of.





KIM JONG-IL: THE DEAR LEADER

The year 1994 was perhaps the worst for North Koreans since the founding of their nation 45 years previously. The country was ravaged by a tragic famine (the result of a disastrous communist planning system), they were feeling the effects of the now dissolved Soviet Union's 'fraternal aid' being cut off, and, Kim Il-sung, father of the nation, died.

For the first time, Western observers saw the mass outpourings of grief that have become such a hallmark of the subsequent deaths of senior leaders in the North. The entire country – much of it starving and economically on its knees – went into an official Confucian three-year period of national mourning.

During that time, and as expected, Kim Jong-il was declared the 'Dear Leader', charged with following in his father's footsteps. So great were those footsteps that Jong-il was declared the North's number two leader and the deceased Il-sung, now entombed and embalmed in a giant mausoleum in the centre of Pyongyang, was named 'eternal president' – forever the DPRK's Supreme Leader.

Once Il-sung had declared his eldest son as his heir in the 1980s, the personality cult machinery went into full swing and soon there wasn't a single North Korean citizen who did not know Jong-il's official origin story. He was reputedly born on Mount Paektu, Korea's highest and most sacred mountain. As he came into the world, a new star appeared in the sky, a double rainbow appeared, an iceberg on a nearby lake cracked, strange lights filled the sky and a swallow passed by overhead to pass the news of his birth on to the world. The legend went on that a young Jong-il remained by his father's side until the Japanese were defeated, finally expelled from Korea and Pyongyang liberated for a bright, new communist future.

In fact, Jong-il was born in a guerrilla camp and no strange metrological or astronomical incidents were reported. His younger brother drowned in 1947 in a swimming pool accident and many have long believed that the older boy pushed the younger under the water and held him down, but evidence of this is unfounded.

Though Kim's official origin may sound comically bizarre to those outside of the country, it makes more sense in the context of the Korean tradition of deploying mythology as a tool to perpetuate tradition and inspire the population. The story is allegory and is probably understood as such by most ordinary North Koreans, even though it served to raise the stature of Jong-il and perpetuate the personality cult that came to surround him and his family.

Despite the propaganda, Jong-il's reign wasn't guaranteed. The North Korean Army's leadership thought him weak — not a soldier like his father. However, Jong-il had proved he was suitably bloodthirsty early on. As a senior official under his father, Jong-il is thought to have ordered the 1983 bombing in Rangoon that killed 17 visiting South Korean officials. Additionally, some high-level defectors have claimed that he ordered the 1987 shooting down of a South Korean airliner that killed all 115 passengers on board.

The Koreans have a proverb: 'Tiger father, dog son'. It was thought to be whispered by some army officers alongside rumours of Jong-il's legendarily louche life of massive French cognac consumption, Hollywood movies and mistresses. Most of those army officers were purged. He also put on more show trials and sentenced executions in the style of his father's reign.

The so-called Dear Leader secured total power. Across the country, statues and posters went up showing the two rulers together and North Koreans pinned the ubiquitous lapel



■ A family portrait of Jong-il with his parents

"THE NORTH LIKES TO ISSUE DRAMATIC THREATS, AND HAS DONE SO REGULARLY THROUGHOUT ITS SEVEN DECADES OF EXISTENCE"

● PUEBLO INCIDENT

Although outside North Korean waters, USS Pueblo was seized by the North Korean Navy. All 83 crewmembers were captured and one killed, creating a diplomatic incident. The ship remains moored on Pyongyang's Taedong River as a tourist attraction.

23 JANUARY 1968

● THE AXE MURDER INCIDENT

US Army officers were cutting down trees in the DMZ when they were attacked by DPRK soldiers. Two Americans were killed by the North Koreans, who oddly claimed that Kim Il-sung had planted the trees.

18 AUGUST 1976

● NORTH KOREA'S FIRST NUCLEAR TEST

Despite the 'Sunshine Policy' from South Korea to defuse tensions on the peninsula and six-party talks involving the North with the South, China, Russia, Japan and the US to seek dialogue, the DPRK exploded a nuclear bomb in direct contravention of international treaties.

9 OCTOBER 2006

● BLUE HOUSE RAID

This was an attempt by North Korean commandos to assassinate the South Korean president, Park Chung-hee, in his residence, the Blue House in Seoul. It is thought the attack was in response to Park's support of the US in the Vietnam War. 26 South Koreans were killed.

21 JANUARY 1968

● DISCOVERY OF INCURSION TUNNELS

South Korean and American forces at the DMZ were shocked to discover four tunnels crossing the zone that had been dug by North Korea. The tunnels were 91 by 121 centimetres, reinforced with concrete and had electric lighting.

15 NOVEMBER 1974

● KOREAN AIR FLIGHT 858

Korean Air Flight 858 was a scheduled international passenger flight between Baghdad and Seoul that exploded in mid-air upon the detonation of a bomb planted inside an overhead storage bin by North Korean agents. It was the 34th anniversary of the end of the Korea War, and the attack is thought to have been masterminded by Kim Jong-il himself to derail unification talks.

9 NOVEMBER 1987

badges featuring the father and son to their clothes — to lose or forget to wear one became a crime. The king and the prince were on every classroom wall, subway carriage, jacket and street poster.

Jong-il had one more plan to consolidate power and ensure no rivals in the army ever rose up and contemplated a coup: nuclear weapons. He tore up every arms control agreement his father had signed and restarted the North's nuclear weapons development programme.

Billions of won (North Korea's currency) were devoted to the project while the country remained hungry in the North's desperate countryside, and power blackouts became more and more common in even privileged Pyongyang. But nukes could give Jong-il total power; they were weapons of mass destruction that he would control and ones that could subordinate the conventional armed forces. The Dear Leader, with his finger on the button, was arguably the deadliest man in the world.

There may be many exaggerations about Kim Jong-il's life, but his fondness for mistresses was a fact. He had a son in 1971, Kim Jong-nam, with Song Hye-rim, a leading North Korean movie actress and beauty. He also had two more sons, Kim Jong-chul in 1981 and Kim Jong-un in 1984, with Ko Yong-hui. Other mistresses followed. When Ko Yong-hui died, her unofficial role as First Lady was taken on by lover Kim Ok, who was purged and sent to a labour camp in 2016.

As was the ancient Korean imperial tradition, the three sons and heirs were brought up separately, rarely — if ever — meeting, and then only at state occasions for a matter of moments. Yet, as Kim Jong-il increasingly became a sick and dying man, it was to be the battle between these three siblings that would almost destroy the monarchy created by his father and lead to exile, feuding and, perhaps, fratricidal murder.

■ Right: Jong-il (bottom left) with his family

■ Far right: Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il are still everywhere in North Korea



SHAKIER THAN YOU MIGHT THINK

The Kim dynasty projects an aura of total control, but there have been challenges...

The rumours over the years are many and varied: bodyguards-turned-assassins, army generals starting coups and fratricidal in-fighting in the clan. But for the most part they have largely been just that — rumours.

Immediately after the cessation of hostilities in 1953, Kim Il-sung showed that he had learned from Stalin by holding a show trial for a dozen party officials accused of aiding the Japanese and plotting to replace him as leader. All 12 were found guilty and executed. Whether there was any truth to their collaboration with the Japanese is questionable. A year later the former leader of the Korean Communist Party in the South moved to the DPRK. He was deemed a possible challenger. A Moscow-style show trial was staged and he, too, was executed.

Rumours have continued to swirl. In the late 1960s, China claimed that Kim Il-sung had been arrested by coup-plotting army generals — it wasn't true. In 1970, several senior army commanders were again purged for opposing the Supreme Leader's policies, while there have

long been rumours of a coup attempt in 1992 by Moscow-trained soldiers.

Kim Jong-il has faced challenges, too. Stories circulated of a planned coup by army units in the famine-stricken northeast region in 1995. In 1998, a shoot-out between police and soldiers led to a curfew in Pyongyang in what, it is assumed, was a direct challenge to Jong-il's rule.

Coups fomented from outside are rumoured, too. The George W Bush administration always refused to rule out a pre-emptive strike on the North, while the Pentagon's 'Operational Plan 5030' was designed to use South Korean and American troop operations to diminish the DPRK's resources, wear down their military and promote a coup attempt. But it was never put into action.

And now one more rumour. After purging and executing his own uncle, Kim Jong-un was faced with a possible coup led by his exiled half-brother, Jong-nam. That alleged attempt perhaps ended in Kuala Lumpur International Airport in February 2017...

"YOU WILL DROWN IN A SEA OF FLAMES"

YEONPYEONG ISLAND FIREFIGHTS

With tensions still high after the ROKS Cheonan sinking, the North deliberately fired at the South-controlled Yeonpyeong Island, killing two South Korean soldiers and two civilians. The South returned fire, killing ten DPRK soldiers. The South evacuated the island for the islanders' own safety.

23 NOVEMBER 2010

DMZ LANDMINES

Confirmation that the DPRK was planting additional and highly explosive landmines in the DMZ came with the wounding of two South Korean soldiers who stepped on mines. The North denied planting them.

4 AUGUST 2015

ANTI-SHIP MISSILES UNVEILED

After several rounds of missile tests that provoked the US 7th Fleet to approach the DPRK's coast, the North fired anti-ship missiles into the Sea of Japan. Pyongyang was particularly unhappy about the US deployment of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense anti-ballistic missile shield around Seoul.

8 JUNE 2017

THE SINKING OF ROKS CHEONAN

This is perhaps the closest the North and South have come to renewed war. The South Korean warship ROKS Cheonan was sunk by an explosion thought to be from the North, though Pyongyang denied it. 104 crewmembers were killed or injured and there were demonstrations of anger and grief in Seoul.

26 MARCH 2010

DRONE WARS

The South accused North Korea of flying drones close to the Blue House in Seoul. DPRK drones were shot down at sea, close to the South's capital, and flying across the DMZ to spy on South Korean and American military installations.

24 MARCH 2014

YEONCHEON MISSILE ATTACKS

In a highly provocative attack, the DPRK fired conventional missiles at the southern city of Yeoncheon, home to 46,000 people. Citizens were evacuated into specially built bunkers, and South Korean artillery fired several times back into the DPRK. High-level talks were convened immediately to de-escalate the tension, though the North failed to explain why they acted as they did.

20 AUGUST 2015

ENJOYING THE GOOD LIFE IN A POOR COUNTRY

While the general population struggles to survive, the North Korean leaders indulge in Western luxuries

\$720,000
A YEAR IN COGNAC

Kim Jong-il was a legendary consumer of Hennessy Paradis Cognac and the brand's largest private buyer



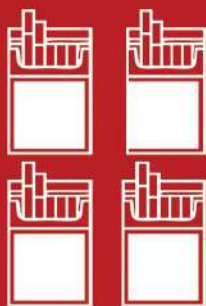
AT LEAST A DOZEN HARLEYS

Kim Jong-il, and now reportedly his son, Kim Jong-un, have had a long fascination with Harley Davidson motorbikes, although they can only ride them in their high-security compounds



4
PACKS OF ROTHMANS A DAY

Kim Jong-il reputedly smoked four packs of imported Rothmans cigarettes a day before publicly quitting. His son, though, is a confirmed smoker, but he smokes a more patriotic copycat version of Rothmans called Paektusan



20
JET SKIS

Kim Jong-un enjoys jet skiing with his close associates. He is thought to have at least 20 jet skis that he rides around one of his private artificial lakes



one
MERCEDES

Kim Jong-un only has one personal Merc, but it's a limited edition Mercedes-Benz 600 luxury sedan



Nine
WHITE ORLOV TROTTER HORSES

Kim Jong-un has nine rare white Orlov trotter horses procured from a stud farm in Siberia



20,000
MOVIES IN HIS LIBRARY

Kim Jong-il allowed one channel of TV and no foreign films in his country, yet had a private video library of 20,000 Rambo, James Bond, kung fu and horror movies

KIM JONG-UN: THE SUPREME LEADER

It was never intended, at least not by Kim Jong-il, that his youngest son, Jong-un, would ever rule the DPRK. From the late 1990s, the Dear Leader determined that his eldest, Jong-nam, regardless of being born out of wedlock, should continue the Kim dynasty and control North Korea some day. But that decision was taken without considering Jong-nam's suitability or what Jong-il's wife thought of his mistress' child taking the leadership from her own sons. What happened next really does deserve the much-overused epithet of 'Shakespearean'.

In 2001, Jong-nam took his son and mistress to Japan. It was a foolhardy trip – not only is Japan a sworn enemy of the DPRK, but the man touted to be the next leader of the world's most hardline communist state was going to visit an icon of capitalist decadence, Tokyo Disneyland. And all on fake Dominican Republic passports.

He was caught at the airport by Japanese passport control officials. His father was so embarrassed that he cancelled a long-planned trip to the DPRK's only ally, China. Jong-nam was officially in disgrace. He had forfeited the role of heir to the throne and was cast out into exile, moving to anonymity in Macao.

There are those who believe that Jong-il's wife and the DPRK's 'Supreme Mother', Ko Yong-hui, was behind Jong-nam's apprehension at Tokyo's Narita Airport. She did not want the offspring of a mistress to usurp her eldest son, and so Jong-chul became the heir apparent, groomed to be leader, seen at his father's side and with Ko Yong-hui beaming wide.

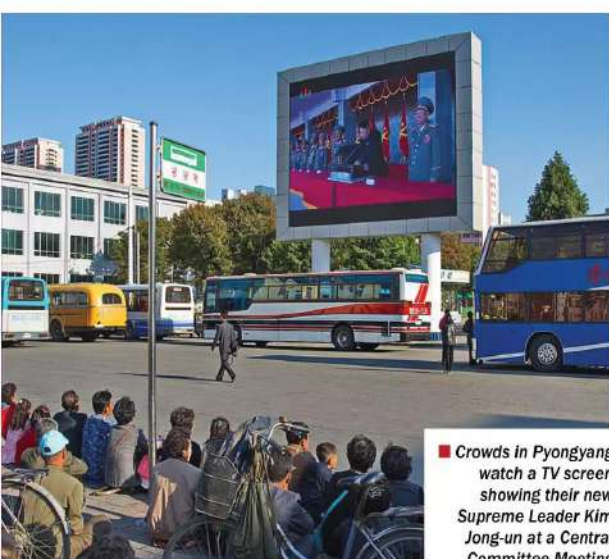
But something went wrong and Jong-chul was sidelined. Some said his father thought he lacked the necessary ruthlessness to be a dictator, others that Ko Yong-hui had always seen her youngest but most beloved son, Jong-un, as the heir. Jong-chul disappeared from the



■ As yet, the young leader's personality cult is not fully formed, though it seems he will seek to imitate his grandfather rather than father in his look



■ Pyongyang residents take part in a rally commemorating the Korean War



■ Crowds in Pyongyang watch a TV screen showing their new Supreme Leader Kim Jong-un at a Central Committee Meeting



■ Kim Jong-un oversees a drill of the Korean People's Army

headlines in Pyongyang, his picture stopped appearing and suddenly, beside his now visibly ailing father, was a young man, barely in his 20s – Kim Jong-un.

His years of debauchery finally caught up with him, and Kim Jong-il died in December 2011. Briefly, out of public view, the three brothers paid their respects to their father at the enormous mausoleum where he was embalmed and placed alongside the eternal president, Kim Il-sung, at the Kumsusan Palace of the Sun in central Pyongyang. Jong-nam came back from exile in Macao under Beijing's protection, Jong-chul from internal exile (having recently been seen in Singapore at an Eric Clapton concert), and they stood alongside the new Supreme Leader, 28-year-old Kim Jong-un. They were together for a matter of moments and then Jong-chul disappeared back into his Pyongyang home and Jong-nam flew back to Macao.

The world underestimated Jong-un. He was ridiculed overseas for being too young, too inexperienced and a playboy like his father, who seemed to prefer hob-nobbing with minor basketball celebrities and good living to turning around an ailing economy and isolated country. But Jong-un surprised everyone. Not only has he accelerated the nuclear programme and edged ever closer to a deliverable missile, but

he has also managed to slightly rejuvenate the country's economy, too. Alongside all this, he has proved to any who have doubted them his hard-man credentials. Arguably, of the three Supreme Leaders of the DPRK, it is Kim Jong-un who has been the most ruthless.

Political purging is now an established tactic of regime survival for the Kim clan, but Jong-un has taken it to new levels of barbarity. Within three years of his rule, he initiated the purging of at least 70 senior officials. And if anyone questioned that he was truly a supreme leader, he shocked even ordinary North Koreans (usually given only the most opaque news of what is happening at the centre) by publicly, on prime time television in the DPRK, having his own uncle and one-time close mentor, arrested.

Jang Song-thaek, the number two leader of North Korea, was arguably the leading male role model in Jong-un's early life, given his own father's distance. But in the end this didn't save him — Jang was accused of treachery and plotting a coup. He endured a show trial and was then summarily executed.

Jang's execution appeared to be the final consolidation of Supreme Leader Kim Jong-un's total power. But perhaps there was one piece of unfinished business that nagged at him, a source of potential opposition, a problem from

long ago that could become an issue tomorrow — his disgraced and exiled half-brother, Kim Jong-nam. In February 2017, Jong-nam visited Kuala Lumpur and spent several days there, though it is unclear who he met. He then went to the city's airport to catch a flight back to his home in exile in Macao.

In the departures terminal, two women threw a poisoned towel over his face and killed him. They were caught but knew nothing. A number of North Korean men wanted by Malaysian police disappeared; the DPRK's embassy denied everything and sought to recover Jong-nam's body before an autopsy could be performed. It is very likely that, despite ongoing trials in Kuala Lumpur, nothing will ever be conclusively proved. But if there was anyone who could lead a coup against Jong-un, it was Jong-nam. That option is now gone, and Kim Jong-un rules truly supreme.

But what happens next is less clear than ever. Jong-un is in his mid 30s, married to Ri Sol-ju, the daughter of close Kim dynasty associates, and they are believed — though it has never been formally confirmed — to have three children. Add to the mix nuclear sabre-rattling, the line of Kim succession and their uneasy overtures to the South and the USA, and the future of the DPRK is far from certain.

KIM IL-SUNG

FROM A GUERRILLA FIGHTER TO THE
FOUNDING PRESIDENT OF NORTH KOREA,
KIM IL-SUNG HAD AN IRON GRIP ON HIS
COUNTRY FOR HALF A CENTURY

WORDS DAVID CROOKES

When Kim Il-sung died – on 8 July 1994 – it not only brought an end to the first chapter of North Korea's history, but also heralded a period of mourning and reflection. During his life he had become the 'sun of the nation'; the Great Leader who, in the eyes of many, could do no wrong. "He turned our country, where age-old backwardness and poverty had prevailed, into a powerful socialist country, independent, self-supporting and self-reliant," said the state news organisation, the Korean Central News Agency. The gushing praise ran over the course of seven pages but it jarred against the image the Western world had of his stated achievements.

After all, Il-sung had turned North Korea into an isolated, repressive nation and he had shaped society into believing he was so perfect that he did not even urinate or defecate. He was the man who fought for independence against Japanese imperialism, who developed a way of thinking that promoted his intelligence and foresight, and whose unique insight reaped rewards matched by no one else on Earth. Or at least that's what the carefully curated story put together by his patriotic novelists had told. Truth is often very different.

Kim Il-sung was born Kim Song-ju on 15 April 1912 in the village of Chilgol. He grew up in Mangyong-dae as the son of Kim Hyong-jik and Kang Pan-sok with the family moving to Manchuria, across the Chinese border, when he was seven. As a teenager, Kim Il-sung regularly attended a Presbyterian church where he was even an organist. Despite that, he would later say that religion did not interest him and that he was not affected by it. "I became tired of the tedious religious ceremony and the monotonous preaching of the minister," he said. Instead, he became intrigued by the desire for independence of his homeland since Korea had been annexed by Japan in 1910.

Kim Il-sung would later describe his family as political exiles, moving in the wake of the March 1st Movement, which had been one of the earliest public displays of Korean resistance. This would fit: why else would they have settled in Manchuria, a place packed with Korean independence fighters and its leaders in that year? It would appear that the young Kim would

give food and clothing to jailed Korean patriots and that he was acutely aware of a collective feeling of oppression and isolation among his country's people. This feeling is known as *han* in Korean culture, and it encompasses unresolved resentment against injustice. It would drive Kim Il-sung to seek a resolution.

On 17 October 1926, Kim Il-sung became a junior founding member of the communist youth group, the Down-with-Imperialism Union. Its stated aim was to fight growing Japanese imperialism and promote Marxism-Leninism, which was the ideology of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Joseph Stalin, who had come to rule the Soviet Union in 1924 following the death of Vladimir Lenin, had presented Marxism-Leninism as a separate ideology in 1926, and it appealed to Kim Il-sung who was, at that time, a student at the Whasung Military Academy in Manchuria. He was 14 years old and left the following year to attend Yuwen Middle School in China's Jilin province, but his communist beliefs were being cemented.

They led to Kim Il-sung being arrested in 1929 along with 20 others who had formed an underground Marxist organisation. Sent to Jilin prison despite no conviction levelled against him, he used his time to reflect and in 1931, he had joined the Communist Party of China, his chosen path being a 'career revolutionary'. It was around this time that he changed his name (adopting that of an earlier Korean guerrilla fighter) and his star began to rise. Making in-roads into the groups that were fighting a guerrilla war against Japan (which ended up occupying Manchuria in 1931 following a peasant uprising), he ended up becoming a unit commander and was engaging with the enemy in 1932, according to his own memoirs.

Kim Il-sung's status continued on its upward path. He became commander of the 6th division and fought the Battle of Pochonbo on 4 June 1937 in northern Korea. In his autobiography, he said the battle "showed that imperialist Japan could be smashed and burnt up, like rubbish". He added: "The flames over the night sky of Pochonbo in the fatherland heralded the dawn of the liberation of Korea, which had been buried in darkness."

It was his greatest moment at the time, even though the town was only held for a few hours. Yet the Japanese were very much aware of Kim



■ A man carries a coffin on his bike as he transports it through the streets of North Korea in July 1987

LIFE IN THE TIME OF KIM IL-SUNG

A peninsula cut in two and a people divided in three ways; times have been tough from the start

Underpinning life in North Korea during Kim Il-sung's reign was *Juche*, the idea of self-reliance. People had to work hard for the state and pledge their allegiance to the party and if they did, they could be richly rewarded. A system called *Songbun* divided people between core, wavering and hostile classes, drawing upon their social and economic background to determine how much food they could eat, the house they lived in, the job they carried out and the education they were given.

OUTLAWING FREE SPEECH

Anyone deemed to be in the hostile class – and that included supporters of Japan and intellectuals – were banished from the cities (particularly Pyongyang) and forced to live in terrible conditions in the country. Indeed, intelligence was frowned upon if it led to independent thought. Free speech was outlawed and, to deal with such dissidence, Kim Il-sung ordered the opening of horrendous political prison camps. This also led to distrust since North Korea relied, to a great degree, on people turning informant. Those affected would be punished with hard labour in inhumane conditions where torture and sexual assault was part of daily life.

ILLEGAL MARKETS

It became not so much self-reliance for those who lived under Kim Il-sung, but reliance on the state and other communist countries. To get around this, people formed and used illegal underground black markets, hoping for enough food to avoid starvation but also to buy items smuggled in from China. They risked their lives in doing so since North Korea under Kim Il-sung assumed full control: even listening to a broadcast from another country began to be punishable. The situation has barely got better since.

■ Kim Il-sung led North Korea for more than 46 years, having become the secretive country's first Supreme Leader





■ Kim Il-sung gives an early address following his assumption of power in North Korea in 1948

Il-sung by now and they sought his capture, killing his fellow commanders and many of his men. This led to him seeking refuge in the Soviet Union where he became a Soviet citizen and became a Major in the Soviet army. He remained in such a position until the Allies won the Second World War in 1945, building up his military experience. This put him in a very good position when the Soviet victors were set to claim their prize of Korean territory. His time had truly come.

In the meantime, Kim Il-sung had married. He tied the knot with Kim Jong-suk at some point in 1940 and in 1941 they had a son, Kim Jong-il (this was changed officially to 1942 to mark 30 years after his own birth). But his main thoughts were seemingly on Korea and he finally made it make to his homeland on 19 September 1945. The Soviets had taken control of the northern zone of Korea with the south occupied by the United States of America. Thereafter, the Soviets spent time trying to build Kim Il-sung's image so that he could assume his place as head of the North Korean Temporary People's Committee (his own task being to get up to speed with his written and spoken Korean). By 1948, he had become prime minister of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Kim Il-sung dearly wanted to unify the Korean peninsula. He convinced the Koreans on his side of the border that anything was possible and he sought to change attitudes. There were efforts to improve grain production and North Korea claimed to have eliminated illiteracy by 1949 (Kim Il-sung University was formed in 1946) but he wanted to expand his position and assume his power over the capitalist leaning

South. Kim Il-sung established the Korean People's Army and in 1949, the Workers' Party of Korea was founded. By 1950, Kim Il-sung had gone to war. The official line was that the South started it but that, like so many 'facts' in North Korea, was simply untrue. The Korean War ended in a stalemate in 1953 and Il-sung consolidated his power as head of state.

There was much work to be done as Kim Il-sung sought to rebuild North Korea in his image. He'd been considering how his territory could emerge during the war, and Pyongyang became a building site. The country received aid, particularly from the Soviet Union and China, but Kim Il-sung's regime reported self-success for the rapid economic development that followed. In the four years between 1954 and 1958, the country said it had increased mining, manufacturing and power transmission threefold. In 1961, Kim Il-sung implemented a seven-year plan. It ended up being extended to 1970 as support from the Soviets waned, but North Korea was ahead of the South in industry until 1965 (in 1960, GNP per capita in the South had been \$60 while the North enjoyed a figure of \$208).

Yet the people were not enjoying the spoils of wealth. Kim Il-sung had them working hard under the self-reliant policy of Juche and he sought to consolidate his own power first and foremost. There had been an attempt by leading DPRK figures to remove him from power – it came to be known as the Second Arduous March – but failure only caused a mass purge of the Workers' Party of Korea and a quashing of the opposition. He was able to rule over North Korea without challenge and the country effectively became independent in 1958 when China withdrew its troops.

Society changed hugely under Kim Il-sung. He sought to "liberate our women from the kitchen", opening them up to employment in factories while allowing childcare centres, kindergartens and outpatient clinics to look after their children. He wanted people to see him as their father, particularly those children who had been orphaned through conflict. Indeed, Kim Il-sung made himself an integral part of Korea to the point where North Koreans would celebrate his birthday over Christmas. The state was also taking over the parental role and the absolute authority of the leader was rammed home in schools. Kim Il-sung may have had little time for religion, or so he claims, but he appeared to have learned a great deal from it in terms of positioning himself into an almost biblical figure.

He would make appearances at factories and other workplaces to give advice and lend help. He ramped up corn production to replace rice, a food that was becoming scarce. Where there was a problem, Kim Il-sung's guidance and 'genius' was said to be the resolution. He also sought to continue his influence by promoting his family into high positions. When he became President of North Korea in 1972, he handed his eldest son, Kim Jong-il, prominent party and military posts. It was clear that the grip on power was going to be handed down, with any

DEFINING MOMENT JOINS COMMUNIST PARTY 1931

The Communist Party of China had formed on 23 July 1921 and it became the founding and ruling political party of the People's Republic of China. Kim Il-sung joined 10 years later while still living in Manchuria under Japanese rule. Five years later, he joined the Communist Party's guerrilla army offshoot, the Northeast Anti-Japanese United Army, which was set up in Manchuria, and he became a high-ranking officer. In 1937, he invaded the China-Korea border in a battle that saw the destruction of a Japanese-occupied police station, foresters' office, post office, school and fire station.



CREATING A DYNASTY

MOVES TO CHINA

Japan's persecution in annexed Korea caused Kim Il-sung's family to seek refuge in China. Kim Il-sung, born in 1912, was just seven, and his pro-independence family had a strong influence on him.

1919

DOWN-WITH-IMPERIALISM UNION

Kim Il-sung, together with school friends, created the Down-With-Imperialism Union. Its creation is still celebrated annually and it's said to be the foundation of the Workers' Party of Korea.

1926

FLEES TO SOVIET UNION

Kim Il-sung was placed on a wanted list by the Japanese who referred to him as the Tiger. They forced him to flee to the safety of the Soviet Union by crossing the Amur River, and he was later retrained.

1940

RETURNS TO KOREA

Having become a Major in the Red Army, Kim Il-sung found himself back in Pyongyang as Stalin's forces sought to liberate it from the Japanese. Il-sung was heralded as the temporary leader of the north.

1945

INTRODUCES JUCHE

Preferring complete independence and wanting no more overriding outside influence to prevail over North Korea's affairs, Kim Il-sung devised a political and religious ideology that advocated self-reliance: Juche.

1955

thoughts of meaningful elections thrown out of the window by this point.

But then, under Kim Il-sung, North Korea had come to own everything. Pyongyang was fashioned as a socialist capital and Kim Il-sung was praised, not only in words but in statues, monuments and images of the Great Leader. People were organised according to class and they were treated differently according to whether or not they were loyal to the regime. But in the 1980s, the country began to decline, in part because China's interest in trading with the increasingly hermit state was waning. Soviet interest in shoring up communism as the Cold War with America continued also proved a distraction that impacted on North Korea. Kim Il-sung sought to improve relations with capitalist South Korea to a small degree by sending athletes to the Winter Olympics in Seoul in 1988, but when communism collapsed in Eastern Europe, Kim Il-sung nevertheless ensured his country did not fall or turn away from socialism. Even when it was blighted by a devastating famine that ended up killing as many as 2 million people, he managed to see it through.

North Korea was admitted to the United Nations in 1991 along with South Korea, but pledges to denuclearise the Korean peninsula came to nothing. Acceptable living standards and high levels of public health had held him in high esteem but at this stage, the cracks were appearing. Far from being self-reliant, the country was importing machinery and equipment and having to get into debt to pay for them. And yet despite all of this, Kim Il-sung's position as the infallible father of the nation remained intact. The propaganda machine held strong thanks to his son, and it appears that he will be forever held in high esteem. As the Eternal President of the Republic, his influence certainly lives on.

THE PERSONALITY CULT

North Korea made great use of the media and propaganda to create an idealised version of their leader

The first statues of Kim Il-sung began to appear in 1949 but figures of a leader in the streets do not make for a personality cult in and of themselves. The hard work began in 1953 when Kim Il-sung began to tour the country offering wisdom and advice to farmers and factory workers. This was consolidated by his son Kim Jong-il's decision to rewrite history and position his father as an undoubted hero when he assumed a position within the state propaganda and information department.

Before long, Kim Il-sung's preferred tag of Great Leader was being heavily promoted and his credentials were overstated. It was Il-sung, the stories went, who brought an end to Japanese occupation and he alone who spearheaded the rebuilding efforts from 1953. Crowds would chant his name and react with great joy when they saw him at a gathering. Choreography played a major role in this, as did fear, but the effect was the same: the Great Leader, the Heavenly Leader as he was also named, was a man to be admired. He was seen as the provider of everything anyone had, whether the clothes on their back or the homes in which they lived.

Later, people were handed badges bearing Kim Il-sung's portrait and asked to wear them – "voluntarily", of course. The fact that most people did was down to fear and strong

encouragement. Exhibits were also created to promote Kim Il-sung's work, while the media peddled the claim that Kim Il-sung had brought success and superiority to North Korea just by being the man leading them. With his people isolated, they had little choice but to support him since they were not privy to any outside contradictions.



■ This 20-metre tall bronze statue of Kim Il-sung is one of 229 figures comprising the Grand Monument on Mansu Hill

"THERE WAS MUCH WORK TO BE DONE AS KIM IL-SUNG SOUGHT TO REBUILD NORTH KOREA IN HIS IMAGE"

DEFINING MOMENT

KOREAN WAR 25 JUNE 1950

With his long-held desire to rid Korea of the Japanese occupiers satisfied, Kim Il-sung's attention turned towards reuniting the divided country by seizing control of the US-occupied South. The North Korean army crossed the 38th parallel and invaded South Korea but, after overwhelming the South's defences, the US helped the south to fight back and the war raged for three bloody years. The main issue was that both Kim Il-sung and Syngman Rhee, the US-backed president of the Republic of Korea, saw themselves as leader of a united Korea. The war ended in stalemate and Kim Il-sung remained head of North Korea.



DEFINING MOMENT

MASS PURGING 23 JANUARY 1968

Between 1967 and 1971, North Korea had purged 17 senior officials during a period in which Kim Il-sung gained control over the army. But a major moment came in 1968 when the North Koreans captured the American USS Pueblo spy ship in an incident that could so easily have caused a nuclear war. North Korea had taken 83 Americans captive inside the country and held them in a freezing, rat-infested building where they were interrogated and beaten, with the guards even going as far as mock executions. Even so, the military leadership involved in that capture were also purged.



NEW CONSTITUTION

Kim Il-sung told his people that "our realities today urgently demand the establishment of a new socialist constitution". It lay down political, economic and cultural principles and made him President.

● 27 DECEMBER 1972

NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY

North Korea put pen to paper and joined the international Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) which prevented it from producing nuclear weapons. It joined the UN in 1991 but violated the NPT in 1993.

● 1985

COLLAPSE OF COMMUNISM

With the Cold War coming to an end, Kim Il-sung had to deal with an economic crisis. Yet Kim Il-sung's power held strong in the face of an expected collapse, and his son's influence only grew stronger.

● 1989

KIM IL-SUNG DIES

Kim Il-sung's power had, by and large, been in the hands of his son, Jong-il, for about a decade, so when he died in 1994 after a long period of ill-health, the succession went very smoothly.

● 8 JULY 1994

KIM JONG-IL

DISCOVER HOW THE WORLD GAINED ITS FIRST HEREDITARY COMMUNIST LEADER AND THE IMPACT HE HAD ON THE DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA

WORDS DAVID CROOKES

When Kim Jong-il was born on 16 February 1942 at a secret military base on Mount Paektu – North Korea's highest and most sacred mountain – the occasion was marked by a double rainbow and a bright star. Or at least that is the official version of the event. As with many aspects of North Korean life, facts are often subverted for reasons of propaganda and control. In reality, Kim Jong-il was most likely born in 1941 outside of North Korea, in or close to the city of Khabarovsk in the far east of Russia, but that story would have proved rather less impressive and dramatic for a regime keen to promote a cult of personality.

Kim Jong-il's father was Kim Il-sung, who at the time of his son's birth was commanding the 1st Battalion of the Soviet 88th Brigade against imperial Japanese rule over Korea. Kim Il-sung's endeavours meant he was often absent while his son was growing up. So when, in 1948, he assumed control of what became the newly established, self-reliant Democratic People's Republic of Korea, it was hard for him to devote much time to family matters.

It meant Kim Jong-il had an emotionally tough childhood, made worse for the fact that his younger brother, nicknamed Shura, drowned, aged four, at the family's home in Pyongyang. A year later, on 22 September 1949, his 32-year-old mother, Kim Jong-suk, also died. By the following summer – thanks to North Korea invading South Korea on 25 June 1950 – the family fled to the safety of the Chinese mountains, remaining there for the duration of the three-year Korean War.

At school, Kim Jong-il proved himself to be a great athlete, musician and academic – a genius able to spot mistakes others failed to see. According to official records, educators would bow to his greater knowledge and change their teachings when they were 'enlightened' to the 'correct' ways. But since most of the official stories about Kim Jong-il's childhood did not emerge until he assumed the role of managing North Korea's propaganda output during the 1980s, it is difficult to ascertain the real truth. For the record, he was made chairman of the Children's Union while attending Namsan Higher Middle School in Pyongyang and he was also a member of the Democratic Youth League.

His home life continued to cause turmoil. His father married Kim Song-ae and they had two sons, Kim Pyong-il and Kim Yong-il. As is customary in Korean society, she persuaded her husband to become less affectionate toward her stepson in favour of her own children. In response, Kim Jong-il over-compensated, seeking to show loyalty to his father. He basked in the reflected glory his connections brought him and also promoted with deep devotion the 'greatness' of North Korea's leader. To remain close to his father, he decided against studying at Moscow University and enrolled at Kim Il-Sung University in Pyongyang, where he studied political economy. He also joined the Workers' Party, the official ruling group of North Korea.

As expected, he was reported to be a bright and prolific student. His body of work encompassed about 1,500 talks, speeches, letters and essays on a broad range of



■ North Koreans would sell their belongings to buy food during the Great Famine

LIFE IN THE TIME OF THE DEAR LEADER

CONTROLLED MEDIA

Back then, as now, tight state controls governed the media, with all journalists being Workers' Party members. Citizens could listen to the radio and watch limited broadcasts on television, but they were fixed to state-run, pro-leadership channels managed by the Radio and Television Committee of the DPRK. Illegal tampering with them attracted harsh punishment from the authorities.

SECRET POLICE

Established in 1973, North Korea's large and brutal secret police force came to number some 300,000 recruits by 1990. Initially reporting directly to Kim Il-sung and then to Kim Jong-il, it would monitor residents and official departments to ensure work was being carried out correctly and that people were not speaking against the regime.

FOOD SHORTAGES

The Great Famine of North Korea coincided with Kim Jong-il's rise to power following his father's death. Between 1994 and 1998, estimates of the resulting death toll from hunger-related illnesses range between 500,000 and 3 million. Many sold their clothes to buy food and defectors spoke of corpses in rivers and skeletal waifs.

SOVIET-STYLE PRISON CAMPS

Most living in Pyongyang were university graduates, party members or in the bodyguard service. Beggars and disabled people were firmly banned. Political prisoners were sent to penal labour camps called Kwan-li-sos where they had little food, were regularly tortured and made to complete hard, physical work.

SINGLE-MINDED EDUCATION

With 300 universities and thousands of secondary schools, all children were educated under Kim Jong-il as they were under his father. They were taught literacy and numeracy and given lessons in science, but a good bulk of the curriculum surrounded the regime. In the late-1990s schools were ordered to have dedicated rooms for lectures about Jong-il.

**"AS EXPECTED, HE WAS
REPORTED TO BE A BRIGHT
AND PROLIFIC STUDENT"**

● Jong-il remained largely
out of sight, saying he
disliked public speaking



■ Kim Jong-il loved film so much that he created several of his own, all to reinforce the cult of personality

LEADER OF THE ARTS

Kim Jong-il was a huge film fan, and while he despised America, he had a penchant for Hollywood movies. He loved James Bond and had a fondness for Elizabeth Taylor. He wrote a book about cinema and he amassed a collection of 20,000 films. More than that, he became involved in film-making too, not only instructing directors to promote the regime's ideology but getting stuck in himself. *Sea Of Blood* was his triumph.

Set during the Japanese occupation of Korea in the 1930s, this war epic was released in 1969 and the idea was credited to Kim Il-sung (thereby allowing Jong-il to perpetuate the cult of personality). Official accounts discuss how Jong-il entrusted writers to come up with a screenplay but would, using his 'genius' and clarity of thought, rewrite the script and perfect it. He oversaw its production as co-director. It was later turned into an opera that debuted at the Pyongyang Grand Theatre in 1971. Other major films followed, including one of North Korea's most famous titles, *The Flower Girl*.

Such was his love of cinema that he went as far as kidnapping two of South Korean cinema's most famous names – directors Shin Sang-ok and Choi Eun-hee – in 1978. They were treated well, in separate houses, but they were taught the ideology of the Great Leader. Shin tried to escape twice and was tortured, required to sit up straight, cross-legged for hours at a time, fed little and forced to write a letter of apology to Kim Jong-il. Five years later, the pair were reunited and they went on to make seven films for Kim Jong-il who, in spending millions of dollars, spared no expense in the pursuit of his film-making dreams.

subjects, none of which actually appeared in print until the 1970s – a time when, incidentally, he had control over a large group of writers. Official accounts say he was a well-behaved, selfless, model student, but he enjoyed female attention, fast cars and partying, and he developed a taste for fine food and alcohol. He would also bully some of his fellow students, knowing no teacher would dare reprimand him. Graduating from university in March 1964, he was already being earmarked as Kim Il-sung's future successor. Officially, the North Korean regime said it would not be grooming Kim Jong-il for office and that his eventual rise would be purely down to his merit and intelligence. But he was given highly prized roles in the Central Committee of the Workers' Party. He also used his influence to put his father's name centre-stage, not least coining the word *Kimilsungism*, a set of principles that pointed to the self-reliance and self-sufficiency of North Korea.

Kim Jong-il's role was to ensure the country would not deviate from the party's ideological system. In 1973, two years after his mistress bore his first son, Kim Jong-nam, he was appointed as the party secretary for organisation and guidance by the Central Committee. A year later his daughter, Kim Sul-song, was born to his wife Kim Young-sook, the same year his portrait began appearing alongside that of his father – they were removed in 1976 for reasons that have never been explained. By the late-1970s, Kim Jong-il was effectively North Korea's co-leader and in 1980, the regime officially announced he would succeed his father.

It heralded a busy time for the son. He headed the construction industry and ordered architects to come up with grand designs for the capital of Pyongyang, although a lack of money and resources meant many of the buildings would be mere fronts, succeeding only in showing off the might of the regime. He assumed control of the party, government and military and looked after art and culture. However, he still remained largely out of sight, pointing to a dislike for public speaking. He rarely went abroad during this period, except for a visit to China in 1983.

He returned from China wanting North Korea to be more open while remaining self-sufficient. He felt North Korea could more than match the growth being seen in South Korea. He also tossed and turned over the idea of opening the country to tourism, but he lamented: "If Pyongyang is opened up, it will be the same as calling back the forces along the border. It's the same as being disarmed."

In the late-1980s, relations with South Korea were deteriorating. In 1987 – the year he had a second daughter, Kim Yo-jong, born to Ko Yong-hui – Kim Jong-il was said to have ordered the bombing of Korean Air Flight 852, an act that killed all 104 civilian passengers and 11 crew on board. This was supposed to throw a spanner into South Korea's plans to host the Olympic Games in 1988, emphasising, as Kim Jong-il feared, the immense financial gulf between the countries. His battle against South Korea he instead took to the streets of his country in the guise of a mass building programme, as high-rise apartments transformed the capital's skyline.

"UNDER HIS LEADERSHIP, NORTH KOREA BECAME MORE OUTWARDLY AGGRESSIVE"

● **ATTENDS KIM IL-SUNG UNIVERSITY**
Preferring not to enrol at Moscow University, Kim Jong-il studies at the Pyongyang-based university that bears his father's name, studying Marxist political economy. His 'genius' is said to be well noted.
SEPTEMBER 1960

● **GUARDING HIS FATHER**
Kim Jong-il starts work in his father's military bodyguard organisation. It allows him to accompany Kim Il-sung on his visits and it is the closest Kim Jong-il will ever come to serving in the military.
1966

DEFINING MOMENT BECOMES PARTY SECRETARY SEPTEMBER 1973

The Central Committee of the ruling Workers' Party appoints Jong-il as the party secretary for organisation, guidance and propaganda affairs. It is an important moment in his life, effectively making him number two and marking him as the unofficial successor to his father, Kim Il-sung. As such, he begins to assume more control as he works to ensure the country does not deviate from the party's ideological system. Reports also go through him en route to Il-sung. He becomes known by the mysterious title 'Party Centre'. The press begins referencing Jong-il using this title over his name.

TIMELINE

KIM JONG-IL IS BORN

His birth is officially recorded as being on 16 February 1942 in North Korea, but evidence suggests he was born in Russia on 16 February 1941, close to the city of Khabarovsk.

● **16 FEBRUARY 1942**



DEATH OF HIS MOTHER

When he is just seven years old, his mother Kim Jong-suk dies aged 32. The following year, the Korean War starts and the family temporarily relocates to China for their safety.

● **22 SEPTEMBER 1949**



OFFICIALLY ANNOUNCED AS SUCCESSOR

The regime announces that Kim Jong-il will eventually succeed Il-sung. He is given senior posts in the Military Commission, Party Secretariat and Politburo. He now assumes the title of 'Dear Leader'.

● **OCTOBER 1980**

COLLAPSE OF THE USSR

In the year Kim Jong-il becomes supreme commander of the People's Army, 1991, the Soviet Union is dissolved, dealing a major blow to North Korea, which relies on the Soviets for trade and aid.

● **26 DECEMBER 1991**

By this time, Jong-il was very much the power behind the country. He became supreme commander of the People's Army in 1991, and he was presiding over a nuclear weapons programme, which the regime publicly denied. But the economy was struggling thanks to the fall of the Soviet Union, and Kim Jong-il needed to find sources of funding. The United States and North Korea agreed on a programme to dismantle Korea's nuclear weapons in exchange for fuel, economic aid and two nuclear power reactors.

In 1994, Kim Il-sung died. His son put the country into mourning for three years and ordered punishments for those who were not showing sufficient grief. In 1997, he officially assumed his role as new leader under the title of general secretary of the Workers' Party and chairman of the National Defence Commission. He began working to eradicate ill feeling caused by the terrible famine that blighted the country in the mid-1990s.

Under Kim Jong-il's direct leadership, North Korea became more outwardly aggressive. The regime paraded its long-range weaponry as a show of strength and sanctioned the launch of missiles over Japan. In an attempt to foster peace in 2000, Kim Jong-il received South Korean president Kim Dae-jung in Pyongyang. It marked a new era of international relations.

The leader visited China in the early 2000s and continued to seek investment into the country. He implemented new economic measures, having been inspired by how China had managed to adapt socialist principles to a market economy. Private enterprise was being allowed in very small measures.

But North Korea remained a pariah in the world. Not only was international pressure mounting against human rights abuses, as huge prison camps were scattered across



■ Portraits of Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il displayed at the Arirang Mass Games, Pyongyang

the country, but in 2001 the United States also named it as one of the countries making up the 'axis of evil'. North Korea was also selling missiles to Iran and Syria. It began producing plutonium and withdrew from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. That led to talks between North Korea, Japan, South Korea, Russia and the United States aimed at scrapping Pyongyang's nuclear weapons programme but, despite ongoing talks, in 2006 the Central News Agency reported a successful

underground nuclear bomb test. This led to relations with the South souring yet again.

In 2007, there were mass floods and Pyongyang was forced to appeal for relief. South Korea sent \$50 million (£32 million). Later that year, another inter-Korean summit was held with South Korean president Roo Moo-hyun, who became the first of its leaders to step across the Demilitarised Zone. A cross-border rail link was discussed. But the following year, diplomatic efforts collapsed and South Korean officials were expelled from the joint Kaesong Industrial Park.

Around this time, speculation began to mount over Kim Jong-il's health. He failed to attend the celebrations of the 60th anniversary of North Korea in 2008 and it was said he had suffered a stroke. Rumours swirled as to who would eventually take over, with the belief that the leader had little time left. There were hopes – and fears – that the country could collapse. But it didn't. Kim Jong-il died from a heart attack on 17 December 2011, aged 69 and his third son, Kim Jong-un, took his place. The great dynasty of the Kim family, or the country they ruled over, showed little potential for regime change.

DEFINING MOMENT

BLAMED FOR BOMBING 1983

In the same year Jong-il visits China, Ko Yong-hui gives birth to his third son, Kim Jong-un. Jong-il is also accused of ordering North Korean commandos to bomb a South Korean delegation in the Burmese capital of Rangoon, killing 21 people including cabinet members. It is an assassination attempt against the president of South Korea, Chun Doo-hwan, who is set to lay a wreath for Burma's independence hero, General Aung San. He escapes the blast only because his car is stuck in traffic, causing him to be late.

DEFINING MOMENT

JONG-IL TAKES CONTROL 8 OCTOBER 1997

Following three years of mourning for Kim Il-sung, Jong-il takes over his father's post as general secretary of the Workers' Party of Korea until 1997. He is re-elected as chairman of the National Defence Commission the following year. The period between 1994 and 1997 is torrid for Kim Jong-il, as the economy nosedives and famine blights North Korea's citizens. While Kim Jong-il agrees with the US to halt its nuclear programme – it later admits it continues to produce weapons – it also announces it would not abide by the armistice that halted the Korean War.

DEATH OF KIM IL-SUNG

Kim Il-sung, who has led North Korea autocratically for 46 years and, with the help of his son, established a cult of personality, dies, resulting in enforced nationwide mourning.

8 JULY 1994

A SOUTH KOREAN GUEST

Kim Jong-il receives South Korea's President Kim Dae-jung in Pyongyang and he appears relaxed and charismatic. Reports suggest he drinks cognac and ten glasses of wine during the meeting.

JUNE 2000

AXIS OF EVIL

US President George W. Bush labels North Korea as part of the 'axis of evil'. Later in the year, North Korea admits kidnapping Japanese citizens in the 1970s and 1980s and it reactivates its nuclear facilities.

JANUARY 2002



UNDERGROUND NUCLEAR TESTING BEGINS

Kim Jong-il gives the go-ahead for underground nuclear weapons tests just months after attempting to test-fire long-range missiles. South Korea starts to take a more determined, hardline approach against the North.

OCTOBER 2006

KIM JONG-IL DIES

Kim Jong-il suffers a stroke in August 2008. In 2011, he dies of a suspected heart attack. 'A fierce snowstorm paused and the sky glows red,' reports the Korean Central News Agency on his death.

17 DECEMBER 2011



KIM JONG-UN

DECLARED THE SUPREME LEADER IN 2011,
KIM JONG-UN WAS STILL IN HIS 20S WHEN
HE TOOK CONTROL OF NORTH KOREA

WORDS DAVID CROOKES

Kim Jong-un is a well-known political figure but, it's fair to say, few people really know what makes him tick. For so long, the media has depicted him as an object of fun, calling him out for his strange haircut and sizeable frame. Meanwhile, US president Donald Trump has nicknamed him 'Rocket Man' due to his penchant for letting off missiles, while Hollywood has portrayed him as a fool.

Yet there is no doubt Kim Jong-un is a shrewd man. Far from being crazy and irrational, the dictator – just his father and grandfather before him – has come to rule North Korea with an iron grip. His moves are calculated for the survival of his regime and few inside North Korea dare to speak up. Much of the population is known to suffer hardship and yet his position, internally at least, appears to be secure.

Kim is the second son of Kim Jong-il and Ko Yong-hui and he was born on 8 January in either 1982, 1983 or 1984, depending on which source is to be believed. North Korea is said to have chosen 1982 since it marked the 70th anniversary of Kim Il-sung's birth and 40 years since his father was born. What is certain, however, is that Kim was chosen over his elder brother Kim Jong-chol as the regime's heir and he's taken to his role with gusto.

A good insight into how Kim was as a child comes from the Japanese chef Kenji Fujimoto. There's a section in his well-read book, *I was Kim Jong-il's Cook*, which remarks on Jong-il's delight at Jong-un's serious, suspicious manner – attributes believed to be rather important if someone is to rule North Korea. That said, he was also known to enjoy a bit of fun. While he attended the International School of Berne, in Gümliigen, Switzerland, and the Liebefeld-Steinhölzli school in Köniz, he is thought to have enjoyed football and skiing in the Swiss mountains. He also apparently showed great skills on the basketball court.

Kim Jong-un is believed to have enjoyed playing videogames, too, a passion that has apparently stuck well into adulthood. Reports in 2017 claimed he had bought thousands of gaming consoles in order to play against those closest to him, but like most information about this hermetic country, such things can often be taken with a pinch of salt. If he does enjoy time with a joystick in his hand, then it would appear he is reluctant for the wider population to join

in – his media mouthpiece, the *Rodong Sinmun* newspaper, said videogames "destruct youths' sound minds and harm them ideologically and mentally".

Such unpredictability and contradiction from Kim Jong-un and his regime, however, is not unusual, for what is usually deemed as being good for Kim Jong-un to pursue is often not good for others. The dictator eats well while his people have suffered food shortages, for example. But he also chain-smokes North Korean cigarettes and he is believed to spend £21 million each year importing alcohol. He also has a penchant for Emmental cheese. Given that his father died of a suspected heart attack, it seems not to worry Kim that a similar fate could await.

For now, however, he is concentrating on power. Although he is understood not to have excelled academically, upon returning from Switzerland to North Korea in 2000 he attended the Kim Il-sung Military University in the Pyongyang ward of Mangyongdae-guyok, and emerged as an army officer. He also studied at Kim Il-sung University where he gained a degree in Physics. Formally selected as heir in 2009, he became the world's youngest head of state in 2011. He was aged 27, 28 or 29, depending on which birth year is believed.

Joining him was Ri Sol-ju, whom he married in 2009. Ri is said to have been born between 1985 and 1989 and enjoyed a career as a singer and entertainer. There is also an understanding that she studied for a PhD in Science at Kim Il-sung University. The couple are believed to have had a son in 2010 as well as a daughter in 2012, induced to be born that year so that the birth would mark the 100th anniversary of Kim Il-sung. As with many things in North Korea, though, the births have been cloaked in secrecy: Cheong Seong-chang, a senior analyst at the Sejong Institute in Seoul, confirms the couple had a son but it is yet to be officially corroborated.

Regardless, Kim Jong-un was officially unveiled as leader two weeks after North Korea had emerged from two weeks of mourning following the death of Kim Jong-il, an event that had led to much wailing in the streets (and scepticism over whether the tears were real). In the process, Kim became the third 'Supreme Leader' of the ruling Workers' party, military



■ A satellite view of Chongjin Concentration Camp 25 in North Korea, reserved for political prisoners

LIFE IN THE TIME OF KIM JONG-UN

North Korea remains secretive, but it continues to be a difficult country to live in for so many people

North Koreans, by and large, are paranoid and oppressed, living under the fear of doing wrong and the consequences they would subsequently face. It is a population that cannot escape – only those with government permission can leave the country. But it is also one that can be treated brutally, particularly if they find themselves in one of the state's hellish prison camps.

IMPRISONED POPULATION

The reclusive state is known for torturing its prisoners. Illness is common in the camps, starvation a way of life and executions regular. Inmates are forced to work hard in all weathers and they can be jailed for speaking out and for seemingly innocuous crimes. Even being associated with someone deemed to have done wrong can lead to incarceration.

CENSORSHIP AND RULES

Those who live in Pyongyang have a better time of it. They are picked for their allegiance to the country and Workers' Party. But even there, the government controls what people can read and enjoy. The media is state-owned, foreign broadcasts are forbidden and external websites are censored. Those living in the countryside fare worse: a very bad harvest in 2017 saw food shortages, although farmers are now being allowed to keep more crops to sell, barter or eat themselves.

OPENING UP

There is also a current relaxation of the rules around private enterprise and Kim Jong-un appears to be turning a blind eye to much black market activity, even though this is officially banned and anyone caught can be punished. More information is also coming in from the outside world, which shows signs of progress, however small. Even so, people are killed for disloyalty and some within the United Nations have called for an international investigation into crimes against humanity. There is still a long way to go, it seems.



and people, and the country's ceremonial head of state, Kim Yong-nam, said North Korea would "transform the sorrow into strength and courage". It was expected that Kim Jong-un's uncle, Jang Song-thaek, would act as a close adviser to someone so young and inexperienced, but things didn't quite work out that way.

Since about 2008, when Kim Jong-un was becoming known in North Korea, the story was of a tough military genius who could fly helicopters and drive tanks (in 2014, this narrative continued when he appeared in a propaganda film showing him taking off and landing a large plane). He was made a daejang on 27 September 2010, which heralded him as a young four-star general despite no military training, and the following day, he was named vice-chairman of the Central Military Commission and appointed to the Central Committee of the Workers' Party. This was a man promoted as being capable of working things out himself, and he fashioned his image on that of his predecessors, most notably his adored grandfather.

Kim became the newly created First Secretary of the Workers' Party of Korea in April 2012. He also became chairman of the Central Military Commission in place of his deceased father. But by announcing his byungjin policy in March 2013, he pivoted away from his father's military-first approach, as manifested in the ideology of Songun. For Kim, the future ideology of North Korea lay in the pursuit of parallel goals: economic development and a strong nuclear weapons programme. He also sought a group of people that could prove loyal to him and so decided that those who worked around his father may not be to his taste.

Vice Marshal Ri Yong Ho was Chief of the General Staff of the Korean People's Army from 2009 to 2012. Until 2012, he had also been a member of the central presidium of the Workers' Party of Korea. On 16 July 2012, however, state media in North Korea said he had been relieved of his Party duties. This was a shock because Ri had been very close to Kim Jong-il and it had been his job to protect the Kim family, something he had shown himself more than capable of doing. Quite what happened next is shrouded in mystery, but Ri has never been seen again and he is assumed to be dead.

Jang Song-thaek was also dumped. He had been married to Kim Jong-il's sister, Kim Kyong-hui, and such was his influence and ability, it



■ Kim Jong-un walks beside the hearse carrying his father's body, as seen on South Korean TV

is said that he led North Korea during Jong-il's period of ill-health and in the immediate wake of his death. The North Korean state broadcaster showed him being forcibly removed from a meeting in Pyongyang in December 2013, however, and accused of anti-party, criminal and counter-revolutionary acts. "Affected by the capitalist way of living, Jang committed irregularities and corruption and led a dissolute and depraved life," the KCNA state news agency reported. On 13 December, the media announced he had been executed.

Such moves, as nasty as they sound, stamped Kim Jong-un's authority on North Korea, sending out a message to the population and wider world. At the same time, he looked to present himself to the people, engaging in photo opportunities and meet-and-greets. He has made numerous public appearances, and he has revived the tradition of making a New Year address. In 2013, this was used to

emphasise the country's military capabilities, among them a long-range rocket that put a satellite into orbit. The speech also sought to "bring about a radical turn in the building of an economic giant with the same spirit and mettle as were displayed in conquering space".

Yet missile launches have frightened the world. Kim's insistence on developing nuclear weapons has also drawn global condemnation and led to crippling sanctions by the United Nations. Although he says North Korea would only use the weapons if another nation was threatening nuclear missiles against it, the fact that a body as unpredictable as Kim Jong-un's regime claims to be ready to detonate self-reliant A-bombs and H-bombs is enough to cause alarm. The upshot of this, however, is that few countries would dare to attack. In that sense, his policy is a winning one.

More recently, though, there has been a thawing in the frosty relations North Korea

DEFINING MOMENT NAMED AS NEXT LEADER MAY 2009

With the health of Kim Jong-il suffering, the North Korean leader named Kim Jong-un as the man to take over following his death. At the time, Jong-il was 67 and he had already suffered a stroke, but Jong-un was allegedly 26, and while some celebrated his youth, others believed his inexperience would finally see the Kim dynasty come to an end. As it turned out, they were proved wrong, since North Korea looked to have prepared well. Reports emerged in the *Dong-a Ilbo* newspaper that North Koreans were already calling him 'the young leader' and were being taught songs about him.



THE THIRD REGIME

KIM JONG-UN IS BORN

Whether 1982 is the correct year of Kim Jong-un's birth, few people know for certain. What we do know is that Kim was born in Pyongyang, North Korea, and he is the son of former leader Kim Jong-il.

8 JANUARY 1982

VISITS DISNEYLAND

Kim is known to have a love of Disney and reports emerged in 2011 that he had visited Japan on a Brazilian passport and skipped over to Tokyo Disneyland during his time there.

12 MAY 1991

ATTENDS SWISS SCHOOL

Kim was schooled in Switzerland where he assumed the name Pak-choi so as not to draw attention to his status as the son of North Korea's dictator. He is said to have been a shy, basketball-loving student.

1993

STUDIES AT MILITARY ACADEMY

He stayed in education in Switzerland until the start of the new millennium, at which point he moved back to Pyongyang where he studied for degrees at Kim Il-sung University and Kim Il-sung Military Academy.

2000

HALF-BROTHER DEPORTED

Kim's half-brother, Kim Jong-nam, tried to get into Japan on a fake Dominican passport. He wanted to go to Tokyo Disneyland but he was rumoured and deported – an incident that may have prevented him from becoming leader.

2001

has had with its neighbours and the wider world, but there have been ups and downs. There was shock, for instance, when Kim Jong-un's half-brother, Kim Jong-nam – who was once named heir apparent – was assassinated by two women using VX nerve agent at Kuala Lumpur International Airport in Malaysia. It was widely speculated to have been on the orders of North Korea and it prompted global condemnation. Yet there was hope when he agreed to allow North Korea to participate in the 2018 Winter Olympics, with the team entering the opening ceremony alongside South Korea and allowing a unified team to be fielded in women's ice hockey.

Perhaps the biggest surprise was when he met US president Donald Trump on 12 June 2018 in Singapore for the North Korea – United States summit. It was the first summit meeting between the leaders of the two countries and it led to Kim Jong-un pledging denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula. Since then, talks have stalled and picked up again as the two sides seek a way forward that works well for both. In the process, Kim has ended byungjin, sensing an easing of his country's economic isolation, but it's set to be many years before a true outcome reveals itself.

As such, the world continues to hold its breath, knowing there is much work to do. North Korea, under Kim Jong-un, has shown a knack for cyber warfare, of continuing with the prison camps that incarcerate and torture so many, of working primarily in its own interest and of bolstering its military prowess as a means of defence at the very least. Kim's rule is still about the suppression of opposition and of dictating to the masses, but there are positive signs. His desire to revive the economy should see standards rise. At least that is the hope. Very few people know what makes Kim Jong-un tick, after all.



TAKING A TRIP

In a bid to open the country to tourism and profit from visitors, North Korea has created some key attractions

Each year, about 5,000 Western tourists visit North Korea hoping to catch a real glimpse of Kim Jong-un's regime. They are encouraged by the Supreme Leader since it brings in between US\$30 and US\$40 million each year, but there is also an insistence that visits are carefully controlled. It is certainly not possible for tourists to wander freely.

Two years after Kim Jong-un assumed power, he oversaw the opening of Munsu Water Park in the heart of Pyongyang. It combines indoor and outdoor pools, a basketball court, a volleyball court and a rock climbing wall, and while it is primarily used by the North Korean elite, foreigners are allowed to go as long as they are accompanied by a guide at all times.

Kim also ordered the construction of Masikryong Ski Resort, which was built in just 10 months at the summit of Taehwa Peak at a cost of US\$35 million. The leader was hopeful of increasing tourist numbers to a million by 2016 and it draws upon Kim's love of skiing, but it is proving nowhere near as attractive as he hoped. That said, more Chinese people have been visiting North Korea following improved relations with China, attracted by the historical sights and even its zoo.

Plans to stay at the Ryugyong Hotel, however, are more ambitious. Despite

construction starting in 1987 and Kim Jong-un hoping for a partial opening in 2013, this 105-story skyscraper in Pyongyang remains unfinished. It acts as a daily reminder of the work to be done by the Supreme Leader if he ever wants to convince the rest of the world of his country's progress.



■ The Masikryong Ski Resort was opened in Kangwon Province on 31 December 2013

“HIS MOVES ARE CALCULATED FOR THE SURVIVAL OF HIS REGIME AND FEW INSIDE NORTH KOREA DARE SPEAK UP”

DEFINING MOMENT NUCLEAR TESTS 2013

Having begun the year calling for a reunified Korea and a better economy, the regime went on to threaten the US with an announcement of long-range missile testing. In February, the country said it had successfully tested a nuclear device, prompting the European Union to tighten sanctions against North Korea. The year brought talk of pre-emptive nuclear strikes, an end to the Korean Armistice Agreement of 1953 and the launch of rockets into the Sea of Japan. The Seoul-Pyongyang hotline was restored by July, however, although rhetoric against South Korea, the US and Japan continued.

DEFINING MOMENT OTTO WARMBIER IMPRISONED 2016

American college student Otto Warmbier visited North Korea at the end of 2015. After enjoying a five-day tour, he joined his group in making their way through Pyongyang International Airport, only to be arrested as he awaited departure. Accused of attempting to steal a propaganda poster from the Yanggakdo International Hotel, he was seen 'confessing' to the crime at a press conference two months later. But when he was finally released in June 2017, he was in a comatose state. There was damage to his brain and he died, aged 22.

BECOMES LEADER

In 2011, following the death of his father, Kim Jong-un is hailed Supreme Leader, and he is later named supreme commander of the military – the world's fourth largest army.

2011

FIRST PUBLIC SPEECH

In his first public speech, Kim Jong-un talks of his "first, second and third" priorities being to strengthen the military. He promised that his country could not be threatened any longer by other nations, like the USA.

15 APRIL 2012

HACKING OF SONY

A group called the Guardians of Peace, which is linked to North Korea, hacked the computers of Sony Pictures Entertainment in retaliation for the movie *The Interview*, which told of two journalists recruited to assassinate Kim Jong-un.

2014

MEETS US PRESIDENT

With three detained US prisoners released, a promise to dismantle nuclear test sites, a united presence at the Winter Olympics and a meeting with China's paramount leader Xi Jinping, Kim finally meets Donald Trump.

2018



JUCHE THOUGHT

NORTH KOREA'S OFFICIAL STATE IDEOLOGY WAS FIRST MENTIONED IN 1955, AND IT HAS UNDERPINNED THE COUNTRY'S STANCE OF SELF-RELIANCE EVER SINCE

WORDS DAVID CROOKES

At the end of the Second World War, with Japan having been forced to surrender, the Soviet Union was able to assume control of the northern part of a newly divided Korea. In 1948, it established the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and aligned its ideology with Stalin's brand of communism. But this not only worried the US State Department, which feared the territory was on its way to becoming a republic of the USSR, it also concerned North Korea's founding leader, Kim Il-sung, who had already spoken of the Korean desire for national self-reliance.

Disillusioned with Soviet dominance, Il-sung believed that a new political ideology was needed. In 1955, he gave a speech to party propagandists and agitators, telling those present, "all ideological work must be subordinated to the interests of the Korean revolution". In other words, he said Korea – or at least a Korea under Il-sung – needed to be put first, desiring the freedom to govern itself and control its own affairs. In doing so, it had to operate very differently to the past and reject "sadaejui", an attitude of political subservience. For too long, he felt, Korea had acknowledged the strength of greater powers. Now it hoped to stand alone.

From this, the concept and ideas of Juche emerged, although it took many years to become fully established and explained. Its development was aided in many ways by the Sino-Soviet split that began in 1956 and lasted for 10 years. During that time, political relations between China and the USSR broke down as they differed in their interpretation of Marxism-Leninism ideologies, and it only served to affirm Il-sung's desire to tread a different path. He

became acutely aware that North Korea could only really survive in the long-term if it could put some distance between itself and other countries. In the meantime, he sought to stay onside with both communist superpowers.

Indeed, he called for a "firm unity" between the Soviet Union and China and labelled them "our great brother countries", worried that either Moscow or Beijing would reduce their investment in the North Korean project if he stated a preference for one of the sides. What emerged in North Korea, however, was a variant on Marxism infused with Leninism and Confucianism, which propagated the belief that the country did not need to be led in any way by China or the Soviet Union. Il-sung may well have signed a Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation and Mutual Assistance with the USSR on 6 July 1961 (followed days later by a similar agreement with China) but he knew the time to push a fresh agenda had come.

Pushing him along was a growing belief that Russia would not militarily back North Korea in Il-sung's still-present desire to unite the Korean peninsula. The Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev was de-Stalinising the Soviet Union, and he had been seen to betray Cuba during the Missile Crisis in October 1962. Il-sung mused that the Soviets would be less inclined to aid smaller socialist countries in the face of any threat from the United States. In 1963, he began to talk incessantly about Juche, which by now was also promoting the idea of military self-reliance. He explained it as "having the attitude of master toward revolution and construction in one's own country" and he said it entailed having self-belief while being non-reliant on others. This 'socialism of Our Style' became a unique philosophy.

"THE IDEA WAS THAT THE DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA COULD STAND ALONE"



A DIFFERENT TUNE

Each year, on 25 August, North Korea celebrates a national holiday called the Day of Songun. It is a celebration of a military-first policy that became part of official government policy three years after Kim Il-sung died in 1994. It prioritised the Korean People's Army (KPA) when it came to dishing out resources.

Although Songun had been devised by Kim Il-sung, it was expressed more by his son, Kim Jong-il, who wanted greater military participation in North Korean politics (even though it took the greater share of scarce resources). It allowed generals have a much greater say in foreign policy and shifted the country's balance.

As a result, the army was elevated to a state function and tasked with achieving the ideals of socialism. Much of the ideology of songun was drawn from the publication of *On the Juche Idea* in 1982, which lent legitimacy and justification for the policy via the idea of North Korean self-reliance in defence.

Kim Jong-un has since sought to water down the influence of songun, weakening the armed forces' position in the government, which had bloated under the leadership of his father. The military chief Ri Yong-ho, a staunch backer of songun, was sacked in 2012, with reports suggesting he had opposed plans for major economic reforms. Other top brass followed.

Byungjin took its place on 31 March 2013 and lasted for just over five years, promoting the parallel development of nuclear weapons and the economy. North Korea's official state media said byungjin was a "guarantee for victory" and it said the policy was crucial "to accelerate the final victory in the anti-American Armageddon".



■ On the 60th anniversary of the Workers' Party founding in 2005, North Korea re-stated its desire for a society led by the ideals of songun



■ Hwang Jang-yop became the highest-ranking official to defect from North Korea

DON'T THINK: DO

Although Kim Il-sung is credited with creating Juche, a North Korean politician called Hwang Jang-yop is widely said to have been responsible. It perhaps says much for the policy that Hwang detected from the DPRK in 1997, but his work was extensive. It involved removing all of the praise for the Soviet Union leader Joseph Stalin from Il-sung's speeches prior to 1955 and it also entailed a spot of historical revision, namely in positioning Il-sung as the founder and leader of the Workers' Party of Korea.

Hwang became sidelined as Kim Jong-il became more prominent, and he wasn't happy at the direction the younger Kim was taking Juche. He said Jong-il had produced a feudal rather than socialist state on the back of Juche and that the people of North Korea had to be loyal to the Great Leader – creator of the Communist Party and the “father of the people”. He said Juche had become a way of preventing people from thinking for themselves.

“You must understand that the North Korean system is far more brutal and inhumane than Stalinism,” Hwang stated. “It totally dominates the minds of most normal people. It is hard to believe but people cannot think critically.” After Hwang defected, his wife in North Korea killed herself and one of his daughters died when she fell from a truck. His other children and grandchildren were rounded up and taken to labour camps.

HOW JUCHE EVOLVED

KIM IL-SUNG'S SPEECH

Kim Il-sung first referenced Juche in a speech he gave called *On Eliminating Dogmatism and Formalism and Establishing Juche in Ideological Work*. It was intended to promote a political purge and establish a new ideology.

1955



JUCHE CONSTITUTION

A new constitution was written in 1972, following a decade when Juche was being transformed into a spiritual ideology. It made heavy references to Juche, thereby making it official and allowing it to infiltrate the Korean way of life.

27 DECEMBER 1972

JUCHE SEMINARS

The first International Scientific Seminar on the Juche Idea took place in Antananarivo, the capital of Madagascar. Two years later North Korea established the International Institute of the Juche idea in Tokyo.

28 SEPTEMBER 1976

DEFENDING SOCIALISM

The speech *Socialism of Our Country is a Socialism of Our Style as Embodied by the Juche Idea* was made in the wake of the collapse of communism in the Soviet Union, explaining why the Juche way still worked for North Korea.

27 DECEMBER 1990

“IN 1963, KIM IL-SUNG BEGAN TO TALK INCESSANTLY ABOUT JUCHE”

STRIKING OUT ALONE

The Juche philosophy allowed a country distinct from the rest of the world to emerge – one that was dependent only upon its own strength. Il-sung believed Juche would enable North Korea to cope with future economic difficulty by looking firmly inwards. By 1965, he spoke of Juche as incorporating political independence (jaju), economic self-sustenance (jarip) and self-reliance in defence (jawil). Juche was also starting to be used to foster the personality cult of Kim Il-sung.

Juche was certainly very different to the manner in which South Korea was progressing. Park Chung-hee had become president south of the 38th parallel in 1963, following a coup two years earlier, and in 1965 he had signed a treaty normalising relations with former enemy Japan, which saw the Republic of Korea receive soft-loans and payment of reparations. As trade grew, Chung-hee's outlook was very much outward and, while this was necessary since South Korea is relatively poor in natural resources, it served to further highlight the growing ideological and political gulf between the two countries.

DEVELOPING JUCHE

The biggest problem with Juche and the concept of self-reliance was that North Korea, for all its abundance of magnesite, zinc, tungsten and iron, lacked the vital resources that were so important for industry, namely coal and petroleum (even today, petrol is used

as a soft-weapon against the DPRK, with China turning off the tap to pile on economic pressure as recently as March 2018). It made hardship for the people inevitable but Il-sung was unwavering in his support for the ideology, making excessive references to the Juche ideology in the country's Constitution of 1972.

This was an important moment in North Korea's history since it not only bestowed on Il-sung the title of President but included constitutional phrases such as Article 44, which expressed a need to “thoroughly establish Juche in scientific research” and Article 45, which said there should be “a Juche-oriented, revolutionary literature and art.” That year, Il-sung also said, “Man is the master of everything and decides everything,” reinforcing the belief that man could do whatever he



DEFINING MOMENT

PRINCIPLES OF JUCHE

14 APRIL 1965

At the Academy of Social Sciences of Indonesia on 14 April 1965, Kim Il-sung gave a lecture that outlined the three principles of Juche. Before then, Juche was mainly doing things the Korean way, with no real ideology. But his talk – entitled *On Socialist Construction and the South Korean Revolution in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea* – stressed the importance of political independence, economic self-sustenance and self-reliance in defence. It helped to cultivate a cult of personality around Kim Il-sung and Juche was used to prefix solutions to problems such as education and manufacture.

DEFINING MOMENT

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

31 MARCH 1982

Kim Jong-il delved deep into the Juche ideology and spelt out exactly what it meant in the treatise *On the Juche Idea*. It was presented to mark Kim Il-sung's 70th birthday and it coincided with the unveiling of the 170-metre high Tower of the Juche Ideology situated directly opposite Kim Il-sung Square on the east bank of the River Taedong. Departing from Marxism-Leninism, it stressed that the masses owed unquestioning obedience to the Great Leader. Only he, it said, could bring the masses to consciousness, with Juche built upon Korean and communist philosophical and social-historical guiding principles.



■ Farmers out working, hoping to grow enough food so that North Korea can remain self-reliant



■ North Korea likes to show people that Juche has been embraced around the world: these plaques are said to be the support of global Juche societies



DEFINING MOMENT

JUCHE CALENDAR

9 SEPTEMBER 1997

In 1997, North Korea decided to play with time itself and it came up with the concept of the DPRK calendar, or Juche calendar, as it has also been called. It defines 1912 as Juche 1, marking the birth year of Kim Il-sung, and it is strictly adhered to. As you'd expect, it entailed a lot of administrative effort (people had to get new birth certificates). Dates before 1912 stick to the Gregorian calendar, however, and a later attempt, in 2015, to turn the clocks back 30 minutes to establish their own time, was reversed in 2018.

"MAN IS THE MASTER OF EVERYTHING AND DECIDES EVERYTHING"

desired if he put his mind and energies to it. This was an idea he was keen to spread across the world, as seen in full-page advertisements in respected newspapers including the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post* and *The Guardian* between 1969 and 1997. These advertisements were promoted to North Koreans through their country's state media, where they were reported to be gushing articles written by Western journalists and used as proof that the ideology was worth investing in. In turn, it soon became the state religion in all but name. The state dogma also became known as Kimilsungism, a system based on the ideas, theories and method of Juche.

Whenever problems emerged with Juche, solutions were found. For instance, Il-sung ordered the synthetic fibre vinalon (known outside of North Korea as vinyon) to be used for clothing in place of cotton and wool, and it became known as the 'juche fibre'. The state also worked hard at figuring out ways of reducing its reliability on imports, forcing workers to use public transport and live close to their workplace so that they wouldn't need huge quantities of petroleum from China, the USSR and the Middle East.

On 31 March 1982, Juche had become so engrained that Il-sung believed an authoritative standard textbook of sorts was needed to fully explain it. Called *On the Juche Idea* (or more grandly, *On the Juche Idea: Treatise Sent to the National Seminar on the Juche Idea Held*

to Mark the 70th Birthday of the Great Leader Comrade Kim Il-sung), it linked Juche with Il-sung's past as a guerilla fighter against Japan and said it was every North Korean's duty to transform nature and society. It was presented as idealist rather than materialist and it linked consciousness to the concept of the leader, presenting Juche as a man-centred philosophy.

It was re-stated as meaning Juche in ideology, independence in politics, self-reliance in defence, and self-sufficiency in development and growth. It said problems would be solved by relying on the creativity of the masses and that there needed to be precedence given to ideological consciousness over all other work. When financial problems beset Asian countries, Juche was reaffirmed as the right path. When communism fell, Juche was hailed as the reason why North Korea could survive, because it was different and unique, and did not follow the Soviet way.

Juche continues today. It had been taken on board by Kim Jong-il (who began to stress military Juche more strongly) and it was adopted and adapted by Kim Jong-un as byungjin, centred around the simultaneous and equal economic and military development. The idea continues to evoke a nationalistic drive for North Korean independence and it is so engrained that it can overcome all hardships. If famine and mass starvation between 1994 and 1998 could not destroy Juche, then it can be assumed that nothing will.

MOVE TO SONGUN

After Kim Il-sung died, Kim Jong-il began moves to bolster the standing of the North Korean army, funneling money into the armed forces as part of a military-first policy, enabling further self-reliance.

1994

TESTING TIMES

Terrible floods followed by a famine, which caused 3 million people to die from starvation, blighted North Korea. It was a real test for self-reliance and Juche thought: Pyongyang and the military were fed first.

1996

INTER-KOREAN SUMMIT

Kim Jong-il met with the South Korean president Kim Dae-jung, marking the first gathering of the country's leaders since the Korean War. They pledged to overcome differences in ideology among other key points.

13 JUNE 2000

STRAINS ON IDEOLOGY

With famine looming once again, *The Economist* led with the headline, *Let them eat Juche*, and reported on a long-running food crisis. It continued for many years and strained the idea of self-reliance.

8 MAY 2008

NEW STRATEGIC LINE

Kim Jong-un pursued a new party line on parallel economic construction and nuclear development. US officials called it a dead-end but Pyongyang said it was prepared to engage with the international community.

MARCH 2013

CLASH OF KOREAS

AFTER BEING SPLIT ALONG THE 38TH PARALLEL, THE KOREAS REMAIN AT WAR AFTER NEARLY SEVEN DECADES

WORDS TOM FARRELL

War zones are not usually good for nature conservation, but the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) – a 250 kilometres long by four kilometres wide buffer zone between the Koreas – is an exception. There has been so little human activity there over the past few decades that endangered plants and animals have found a haven.

Elsewhere in the DMZ, however, the land is topped by barbed wire, watchtowers and anti-tank traps. Innumerable land mines lie under it and a ferocious concentration of artillery is pointed at it. On either side are the 490,000 troops of the southern Republic of Korea Army (ROKA) and the more than 1.2 million troops of the northern Korean Peoples' Army (KPA). Incidents between the two regularly take place near the DMZ and its maritime equivalent, the Northern Limit Line (NLL) in the Yellow Sea.

In a nightmare scenario, a ROKA-KPA clash will escalate into a more general confrontation, perhaps all-out war. One such incident occurred on 20 August 2015, when the KPA launched artillery rounds at a ROKA base in the town of Yeoncheon, 60 kilometres north of Seoul. At the time, South Korea had resumed an old tactic of broadcasting anti-regime propaganda into North Korea. The South Koreans fired back with 155mm howitzers. Earlier that month, two ROKA troops had been injured by a land mine near the DMZ; North Korea denies the accusation that its military planted the mine.

Small-scale clashes like these occur at least every few weeks, a major crisis every few years. A quarter of a century has passed since the end of the Cold War – at least in the rest of the world. In Korea, it seems as if time has

stopped flowing. But the Korean War of the early 1950s was more than just another super power showdown. Rather, the war was the most bloody and international phase of a civil war that began in 1948 and continues today.

The two Koreas remain at war. In July 1953, at Panmunjom, the international combatants, locked in military stalemate, were able to sign a face-saving armistice that allowed for the exchange of POWs and a cessation of hostilities. Their local allies, with rival capitals in Seoul and Pyongyang, have never signed a formal peace agreement.

This is a tragic irony, especially as Korea, unlike so many other conflict zones, is not a jigsaw of races and faiths. Despite a common language, customs and culture, geography and geopolitics have kept the country partitioned.

In 1945, just as they quarrelled over Germany's empire in the West, so the Americans and Soviets competed for Japan's possessions in the East. The Korean peninsula, a former Japanese colony, was bisected along the 38th parallel of latitude, with the Red Army controlling a communist North and the United States administering the South. By mid 1948, rival states had been established. Border clashes began almost immediately. Two years later, with the covert backing of Stalin, the North's Kim Il-sung attacked the South, with the resulting war leaving 2.5 million dead.

Seven decades after partition, his grandson, Kim Jong-un, is believed to have about six crude nuclear devices at his disposal and possibly the ballistic capability to deliver them. However, a nuclear war is a hypothetical scenario. Since 1953, a very real war has ground on across land, air and sea.



"A QUARTER OF A CENTURY HAS PASSED SINCE
THE END OF THE COLD WAR - AT LEAST IN THE
REST OF THE WORLD. IN KOREA, IT SEEMS AS IF
TIME HAS STOPPED FLOWING"



■ The Freedom House seen from the north



THE JOINT SECURITY AREA (JSA)

The Joint Security Area (JSA), sometimes called the Truce Village, is an island of supposed neutrality within the vast ribbon of the DMZ. Three blue UN buildings, once used for negotiations, straddle a thin slab of concrete called the Military Demarcation Line (MDL).

They now largely remain empty as ROKA and KPA soldiers, trained in Taekwondo, strike belligerent poses on either side of the MDL.

The original village of Panmunjom, bombed to ashes during the war, was located about half a mile north of the enclave. All that now remains is the hastily constructed pavilion where the armistice was signed, now the North Korean Peace Museum.

Approaching the JSA from the south, visitors pass Daesong-dong, a heavily subsidised farming village and the only civilian settlement within the DMZ. Male residents of Daesong-dong are exempt from military service but a curfew falls at 11pm. A UN checkpoint, abandoned in the 1980s, leads to the 'Bridge of No Return', the bridge across which tens of thousands of UN and communist prisoners were exchanged during Operations Little Switch (April 1953) and Big Switch (April-September 1953). The last time the bridge served this purpose was in December 1968 when the crew of the USS Pueblo were released from captivity.

The MDL is now flanked by two expansive buildings, the Pamnungak Pavilion to the North, and Freedom Pagoda in the South. The United Nations Command Security Battalion (UNCSB-JSA) is tasked with enforcing the terms of the armistice. Over six decades, the American contribution has been scaled down: since 2004, a ROKA battalion has assumed full responsibility for the JSA and its commander is deputy of UNCSB-JSA.

DYNASTIC RULE

To most outsiders, North Korea seems like an aberration in the early 21st century: a xenophobic fortress state, run by a family dynasty with a founding Suryong (Great Leader) who began his reign as a despot and ended it as a deity. Except that he hasn't: although Kim Il-sung these days lies motionless within a glass sarcophagus in a giant palace on Pyongyang's outskirts, the 1998 constitution of North Korea made him 'President for Eternity'. Every adult must wear a badge bearing his likeness. The Western calendar was abandoned in the 1990s in favour of one that begins in 1912, the year of Kim's birth. All North Korea revolves around this new calendar.

■ The statues of Kim Il-sung (left) and Kim Jong-il on Mansu Hill in Pyongyang



Grinning down from innumerable posters, immortalised in bronze in every public space, Kim is lauded as a father figure of unimpeachable virtue and wisdom. Having seen off the Japanese and American imperialists, Kim is said to have built an earthly paradise, an island of plenty in a sea of want. Today, the propaganda seems ludicrous, even grotesque. In the years immediately after his death, North Korea was gripped by the last great famine of the 20th century.

North Korea's 'Dear Leader' Kim Jong-il inherited a Soviet-style command economy from his father in 1994. Unwilling to open it to the outside world, North Korean industry and agriculture went into freefall under his watch; 2 to 3 million people perished.

Today, under the rule of Kim's grandson, North Korea vanishes by night. Night-time satellite images of the peninsula turn South Korea into an island, a claw of luminosity seemingly hacked off the East Asian landmass. North Korea remains, literally, in the Dark Ages.

HOME-GROWN IDEOLOGY

The North's economy grew faster than the South's in the decades after 1953. Following his calamitous war, Kim Il-sung stayed in power only with the backing of China and the Soviet Union, both of which bordered his northern frontier. Meanwhile, following the armistice, the United States deployed tactical nuclear weapons just over the DMZ. After January 1958, nuclear-capable 'Honest John' MGR-1 surface-to-surface missiles and M-65 Atomic Cannon were a permanent presence on South Korean soil.

"KIM IS LAUDED AS A FATHER FIGURE OF UNIMPEACHABLE VIRTUE AND WISDOM"

North Korea's geographical position was uniquely dangerous, but for Kim, uniquely advantageous. Sandwiched between both halves of the Cold War, and later, both sides of the Sino-Soviet schism, he could simultaneously play upon a deep belligerence towards the West while extracting the maximum amount of aid from Moscow and Beijing.

The former was hardly a difficult task. North Korean art exults in martial themes: yelling MiG pilots and flag-waving KPA soldiers are depicted shooting their way to glory. But in July 1953, North Korea was a wasteland. Hundreds of thousands of its people were dead. The mostly American UN aircraft had flown 720,980 sorties against North Korea during the war, dropping 476,000 tons of ordnance. "We burned down every town in North Korea," boasted the commander of the Strategic Air Command General Curtis LeMay. During the war's largest air raid on 29 August 1952, Pyongyang was levelled by a 1,403-sortie assault.

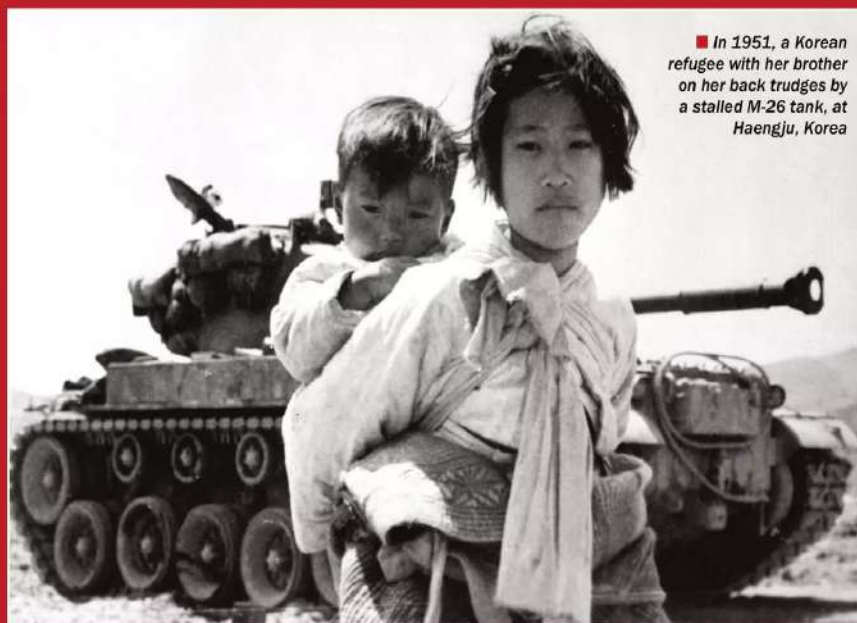
In June 1953, the US Airforce bombed irrigation dams and the retaining walls of the North's Toksan reservoir, flooding towns and destroying agriculture, an act that the world considered and condemned as a war crime when the Nazis did something similar in the Netherlands a few years before. However unnerving the anger in North Korean propaganda, it is hardly surprising.

WAR IN KOREA

A largely forgotten conflict that pitched the United Nations against the communist powers and threatened to go nuclear

The war that erupted on the Korean peninsula in the summer of 1950 was technically known as a 'police action', the first major challenge to the newly formed United Nations. Today, it is a largely forgotten war, despite leaving more than 2 million soldiers and civilians dead. Certainly, compared to the United States' other great East Asian conflict, where Cold War politics turned lethally hot, Korea's cultural imprint seems negligible.

While the Vietnam War inspired a slew of Hollywood blockbusters, the movie treatment of Korea is largely confined to *The Manchurian Candidate* (1962) and *M*A*S*H* (1970). Yet it can be argued that, after the Cuban Missile Crisis, the 'forgotten war' was the closest the world ever came to a nuclear war. The United States might have recognised the seeds of later defeat in Vietnam. Committed – in theory – to fighting a limited war against an enemy prepared to fight total war, the US lost nearly as many military dead in three years fighting in Korea as they would in Vietnam over nearly a decade. Washington also discovered the problems inherent in supporting a corrupt and incompetent regime that traded on anti-communism. Korea did not inspire sit-ins on



■ In 1951, a Korean refugee with her brother on her back trudges by a stalled M-26 tank, at Haengju, Korea

the US's campuses, large-scale demonstrations or the ire of celebrities and the mainstream media. But after three years, the war was unpopular enough for president elect Dwight Eisenhower to fulfil the promise of his campaign speech: "I shall go to Korea" and sue for peace.

In June 1950, with the covert go-ahead of Moscow, Kim Il-sung's armies stormed over the 38th parallel of latitude, four lines of T-34 tanks mauling the ill-prepared forces of Dr Syngman Rhee's southern regime. A token US presence at Osan (today near to the base of the Pacific Air Force's 51st Fighter Wing) was badly mauled. An American-led UN task force was assembled, led by General Douglas MacArthur. 16 other nations provided fighting troops; Britain's 27th and 29th Brigades would sustain 1,078 fatalities in Korea. For the first few weeks, the UN held

the Pusan Perimeter on the south-east extremity of the peninsula. MacArthur masterminded an amphibious assault on the port of Inchon in October 1950, cutting Kim's overstretched armies in half and allowing UN forces to retake the southern capital of Seoul.

But as UN forces pushed into North Korea, MacArthur made ever more belligerent statements, threatening nuclear war with China. Eventually, he was dismissed by President Harry Truman and replaced by General Matthew Ridgway. By then, 300,000 Chinese 'volunteers' had crossed the River Yalu, pushing back UN forces. Seoul fell to communist forces and was retaken once more. The war settled into two years of gruelling attrition before an armistice – but not a formal peace treaty – was signed in Panmunjom, site of the current JSA.

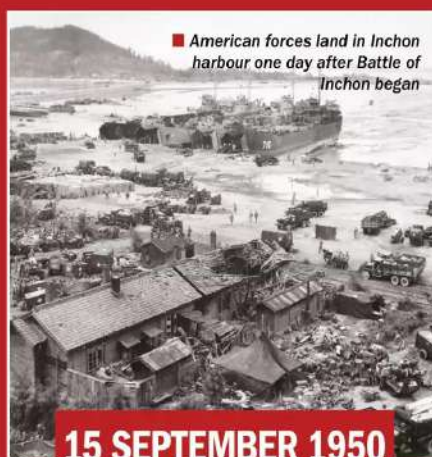
KEY DATES



■ Forces cross the 38th parallel

25 JUNE 1950

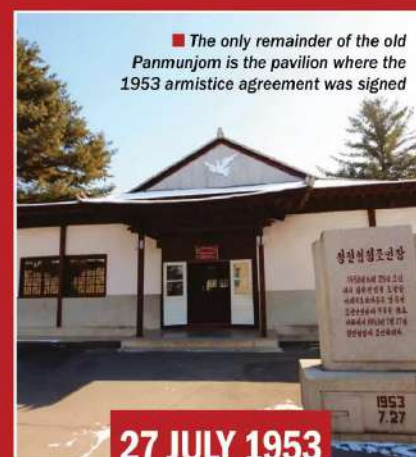
Since formal partition in mid 1948, there had been regular border clashes along the 38th parallel of latitude that formed the border between the two Koreas. During the early 1950s, North Korea's Kim Il-sung had sought Stalin's backing for invasion. This was granted with the understanding that the South would be quickly overrun and the Soviets would send no troops. North Korean tanks and troops crossed the border on this date but their historians have always claimed they were acting defensively against South Korean aggression.



■ American forces land in Inchon harbour one day after Battle of Inchon began

15 SEPTEMBER 1950

Despite reservations by the joint chiefs of staff as well as key naval officers and many other generals, the UN Supreme Commander General Douglas MacArthur advocated a surprise attack on the port of Inchon, South Korea. On 15 September, the 5th Marines stormed ashore at 'Green Beach' on Wolmi-do island; later that day, landing craft discharged thousands more troops. The 1st and 5th Marines linked up ashore the next day and began an eastward drive. Seoul was retaken on 27 September but the city was heavily damaged in the process.



■ The only remainder of the old Panmunjom is the pavilion where the 1953 armistice agreement was signed

27 JULY 1953

After three years of conflict, the Korean War formally came to an end as an armistice was signed in the village of Panmunjom at 10am. It was signed by General Nam Il for North Korea and General William Harrison Jnr, the head of the United Nations Command (UNC) delegation. In separate ceremonies, it was also countersigned by UNC Commander-in-Chief General Mark W Clark in Munsan and Northern Korean premier Kim Il-sung, as well as Marshal Peng Dehuai of the Chinese People's Volunteer Army in Kaesong.

1 THE CAPTURE OF USS PUEBLO 23 JANUARY 1968

The USS Pueblo-AGER II, an environmental research vessel converted for intelligence gathering, is accused by the North Koreans of intruding into their waters when it is approached and challenged by a sub-chaser. Washington claims that it is in international waters. However, the North Korean vessel opens fire and gives chase, accompanied by torpedo boats and MiG fighters. One of the 83-man crew is killed before Pueblo is boarded. The sailors had stalled for time and attempted to destroy classified documents and machinery. They would not be released until 23 December, by which time they had been imprisoned, tortured and paraded before communist-bloc media. The North Koreans managed to coerce letters of apology from the captain, Lloyd 'Pete' Bucher, and the US government, the latter being retracted as soon as the sailors were released.



■ Above: The crew of USS Pueblo arrive at the UN Advance Camp, DMZ, on 23 December 1968

2 SPY PLANE SHOT DOWN 15 APRIL 1969

The US Navy Lockheed EC-121 Warning Star is shot down by two North Korean MiG-21 fighters 167 kilometres off the North Korean coast, with the deaths of its entire 31-man crew. This is the biggest loss of life for a US air crew during the entire Cold War. The mission formed part of the 'Beggar Shadow' intelligence-gathering mission wherein the US Navy's reconnaissance aircraft would listen in on communist communications over international waters. Washington did not respond militarily, but conducted reconnaissance. However, the National Security Council and joint chiefs of staff did consider several options, including air strikes against North Korea.

■ Lockheed EC-121 Warning Star in the 1960s



3 AXE MURDERS AND OPERATION PAUL BUNYAN 8 AUGUST 1976

Two American soldiers are mortally wounded by attacking KPA soldiers as they and ROKA troops attempt to fell a tree that obscures Command Post 3, the JSA's northernmost observation point. On 21 August, Operation Paul Bunyan commences. Two six-man units from the US Army Corps of Engineers enter the JSA bearing chainsaws, each accompanied by army support units and backed by two dozen attack helicopters. Aircraft patrols are launched from bases all across South Korea and the USS Midway cruises the coast. The tree is felled but thereafter the JSA could not be crossed. Until August 1976, unarmed soldiers from both sides could circulate within the JSA.



MAJOR INCIDENTS IN THE KOREAN CONFLICT SINCE 1953



23 NOVEMBER 1984

During a communist-led tour of the JSA, Soviet citizen Vasily Matusak suddenly dashes across the MDL, pursued by KPA troops. A fire fight ensues that leaves five North Koreans and one ROKA soldier dead.

29 JUNE 2002

Fire fight between North and South Korean vessels after North Korean ships cross the Northern Limit Line (NLL) near the island of Yeonpyeong.

9 OCTOBER 1983

North Korean agents attempt to assassinate President Chun Doo Wan in a bomb blast at the Martyr's Mausoleum in Rangoon, Burma. The president survives but 21 others are killed. Two of the bombers are captured.

**11 DECEMBER 1969**

A North Korean agent hijacks Korean Airlines Flight YS-11 with four crew and 47 passengers. 11 South Korean crew and passengers remain in North Korea today.

15 NOVEMBER 1974

The first of four (known) tunnels under the DMZ is inadvertently discovered by a South Korean patrol. It runs for about one kilometre and would allow the passage of 2,000 North Korean troops per hour.

2 NOVEMBER 1966

One South Korean and six American soldiers are killed by KPA during an ambush south of the DMZ. Beginning of three-year border conflict.

17 JANUARY 1968

A 31-man North Korean detachment crosses the DMZ and attempts to assassinate South Korean President Park Chung-hee at the Blue House parliament building in Seoul.

16 FEBRUARY 1958

North Korean agents hijack a South Korean airliner during an internal flight and fly it to North Korea. Eight of the 27 passengers are never returned.

17 DECEMBER 1994

An American OH-58 Kiowa, lost in fog, strays north of the DMZ where it is shot down. Chief Warrant Officer David Hileman is killed; Warrant Officer Bobby Hall is captured and forced to sign a confession before his release on 30 December.

18 SEPTEMBER 1996

A disabled North Korean submarine is spotted on the east coast of South Korea, near Gangneung. 13 North Korean commandos who escaped are tracked down and killed over 49 days.

**4 THE SINKING OF THE CHEONAN
26 MARCH 2010**

At 9.22pm, the 1,200-ton Republic of Korea Navy corvette Cheonan (Heaven's Peace) is on patrol near Baengnyeong Island when it explodes and breaks in half. The vessel is in contested waters 20 kilometres from the North Korean coast; out of a 104-man crew, 58 are rescued and 46 die. An investigation into the sinking by South Korean and international experts concludes that the Cheonan was sunk by a torpedo fired from a North Korean mini-submarine – a charge the North denied. The South Korean Navy is now seeking to bolster its 13-submarine fleet and has recently boosted coastal naval artillery defences.



■ Above: Officials look upon the salvaged wreckage of the ROKS Cheonan

“EXPERTS CONCLUDED THAT THE CHEONAN WAS SUNK BY A TORPEDO, FIRED FROM A NORTH KOREAN MINI-SUBMARINE”

**5 NORTH KOREAN ARTILLERY SHELLS YEONPYEONG ISLAND
23 NOVEMBER 2010**

Naval clashes had occurred near the island, which is close to the disputed Northern Limited Line (NLL) in 1999 and 2002. This attack came following a South Korean artillery exercise nearby. During the bombardment, North Korea fires about 170 shells at the island, killing two South Korean Marines and two civilians. South Korea returns fire, causing an unknown number of casualties to the North, and the island is temporarily evacuated. The United Nations condemns the action as one of the most serious violations of the 1953 armistice.



■ Above: A civilian house that has been reduced to rubble after the shelling of Yeonpyeong Island



■ A US soldier attached to the UNCSCB-JSA points towards the Sachong river in North Korea



■ A soldier from the Korean Peoples' Army points past one of the .50-calibre guns that had been fitted on the USS Pueblo prior to its mission



■ On Baengnyeong Island, the northernmost point of South Korea, an M-48 Patton tank sits on a high point

Kim sought to build an economy based on heavy industry after 1953. Like Joseph Tito in Yugoslavia, he was a former guerrilla, distrustful of getting too close to just one communist bloc. North Korea's vitally strategic position as a bulwark against the US in East Asia allowed him to be particularly duplicitous.

After the Sino-Soviet split during the 1960s, Kim initially sided with Chairman Mao Zedong against the Soviets. Maoism fell out of favour after 1966 when China was seized by the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution: North Korea's 'Great Leader' feared and detested the youthful fanaticism of Mao's Red Guards and they returned the compliment, describing him as a "fat counter-revolutionary pig".

But by the 1970s, North Korea had adopted a policy of equidistance between the two communist giants. Moreover, by then 'Marxist' and 'Leninist' jargon had served its purpose. By the drafting of the 1972 constitution, both words would disappear from official documents.

Two years before, a home-grown ideology called Juche (self-reliance) had been adopted as North Korea's 'sole guiding principal' at the Fifth Party Congress of the Korean Workers' Party. Much of it was rooted in Confucianism, the guiding philosophy of Korea's Chosun Dynasty (1392-1910). Both extolled a divine ruler, familial hierarchy, a controlled economy and hostility to foreign contamination.

As ruler, Kim's legitimacy was based on two falsehoods. First, he claimed to have led the resistance to the 1910-45 Japanese occupation, when in fact the resistance comprised multiple factions and ideologies: Kim's partisans were semi-gangsters whose biggest victory was to occupy a town of 1,400 houses for 24 hours. The second was that he led North Korea to a glorious victory by 1953. The 'Heroic Fatherland Liberation War' had ended in stalemate with the peninsula in ruins and the annexation of the South a failure. Kim's armies had been rescued from certain annihilation by the intervention of the Chinese

in 1950. But by providing an ancient cultural framework for a modern state, Juche appealed to a proud people who felt humiliated by the Japanese occupation and traumatised by the American-led war.

A SECOND WAR IN KOREA

Central to Juche doctrine is an uncompromising hostility towards the 'puppet regime' in South Korea. If each of the three Kims has been the only legitimate ruler of the Korean race, then no accommodation with another Korea is possible. To do so would be to invalidate Juche and invite overthrow of the regime.

Boasts of 'self reliance' may strike outsiders as absurd, given North Korea's reliance on the largesse of other communist states. From 1948-84, Moscow and Beijing bankrolled the economy to the tune of \$2.2 billion and \$900 million respectively. The bombed-out city of Hamhung was practically rebuilt by East Germans in the 1950s.

But the last Chinese soldiers had left North Korea by 1958. By contrast, 28,000 US troops attached to US Forces Korea (USFK) remain in South Korea to this day, most them at the Yongsan Garrison in central Seoul. By the following year, Kim had purged the party of any members with links to China or the Soviet Union: about 80,000 people are estimated to have vanished in this crackdown.

As a response to the American deployment of nuclear weapons in South Korea, the North began a massive programme of underground building, deploying more forces close to the DMZ. Kim's 'Four Military Lines' policy, adopted in the early 1960s, anticipated a collapse of the armistice. Accordingly, the whole population was expected to partake in a massive defensive war: every district was ordered to stockpile enough food and weapons to sustain a high-intensity conflict for three months.

By 1965, Kim had asked for Mao's backing in another strike against the South. Mao declined

– and would do so again in 1975 – so Kim looked further south for inspiration. In Vietnam, the old enemy was becoming embroiled in a military quagmire. Elite South Korean Marines were also being diverted there to combat highly motivated guerrillas, fighting under a communist flag, whose insurgency might provide the template for a second Korean War.

On 5 October 1966, Kim gave a speech in which he challenged the legitimacy of the armistice. Weeks later, the first of numerous clashes involving ROKA and USFK troops against KPA infiltrators took place.

Today, South Korea's economy is estimated to be 38 times the size of its northern rival. But in the 1960s, with an economy based on heavy industry, North Koreans actually had higher living standards. South Korea was corrupt and impoverished, ruled by the military strongman Park Chung-hee. If popular discontent against Park could be augmented by a peasants' war in the countryside, Kim surmised, then the KPA soldiers that one day streamed south would be welcomed as liberators.

But a protracted communist insurgency in South Korea faced a number of problems. The topography of the south was largely flat and given over to farmland, presenting far less protection against helicopter-mobile soldiers than the mountains and jungle canopy of Indochina. Plus, a Viet Cong-style insurrection would have little popular support among a civilian population with relatively fresh memories of the massacres committed by the KPA after its 1950 invasion.

In October-November 1968, roughly 120 KPA commandoes landed on South Korea's north-east coast with the objective of building bases for guerrilla war in the Taebaek Mountains that form the eastern spine of Korea. Almost all of them were soon killed or captured. The night of the YS-11 hijacking, 11 December 1969, more than 100,000 South Koreans marched through Seoul, some burning effigies of Kim Il-sung.

The 1966-69 border conflict ultimately failed

WEAPONS THAT WORRY THE WEST

North Korea is impoverished and has endured one of the worst famines of recent years, but its military arsenal is still lethal



KN-08 MISSILE

Also known as the Nodong-C and Hwasong-13, this is a road-mobile Intercontinental Ballistic Missile, although it is not known if it has the capacity to carry a nuclear warhead yet. On 10 October, a newer version was believed to have been paraded through Pyongyang. The shortened nosecone may be indicative of a guidance system based on Russian technology.

KOKSAN ARTILLERY PIECE

A 170mm self-propelled howitzer, the Koksan can fire four rounds in its first minute and then one round every three minutes thereafter. With a 37-mile range, it would be capable of hitting Seoul from the DMZ and causing massive casualties in an all-out attack.



SANG-O MIDGET SUBMARINE

Capable of ambushing southern naval vessels, the Sang-O is equipped with four torpedo tubes and can carry up to 16 mines. One was found beached at Gangneung as part of an attempted infiltration of the South in 1996. A longer version called the K-300 was identified in 2011.



to turn South Korea into a second Vietnam-type quagmire, a failure Kim himself acknowledged in late 1968 when he executed several of his leading generals and his Minister of Defence. But in three years, 299 ROKA and 43 USFK soldiers were killed in clashes along the DMZ together with several hundred KPA. The joint chiefs of staff designated the area north of the River Imjin and south of the DMZ a hostile fire zone while the USFK commander authorised some special forces to be diverted to ROKA.

The conflict culminated in an attempt by North Korean soldiers to assassinate President Park in Seoul and the almost year-long captivity of the USS Pueblo crew. By the end of 1969, however, tensions had diffused although incidents continued during the 1970s and 1980s, such as the discovery of four North Korean tunnels under the DMZ. The third of these, discovered in October 1978, is only 44 kilometres from Seoul. Upon discovery, the North Koreans claimed to be drilling for coal, despite the tunnel walls being made of granite. Other tunnels are believed to exist that could facilitate a ground invasion of the south.

Numerous incidents have taken place in the skies since 1958, including the shooting down of military craft and the hijacking of civilian aircraft by North Korean agents. The most recent took place in April 2014 when an unidentified drone aircraft was discovered on the South Korean island of Baengnyeong.

Korea's two navies have clashed

intermittently since at least 1970 particularly over the issue of the NLL, which the north disputes. In 2010, the sinking of the Cheonan and shelling of Yeonpyeong Island formally ended a long period of inter-Korean engagement known as the 'Sunshine Policy'.

TRUSTPOLITIK

The DMZ, for the foreseeable future, is unlikely to witness instability on the scale of 1966-69, although land and naval clashes will probably still occur. Kim Jong-un is almost certainly aware that any attempt to restart the 1950-53 war would end very badly; the destruction of his regime would be guaranteed within weeks at most and he himself would probably perish along with his family, incinerated by US-fired 'bunker buster' bombs.

Even so, his arsenal of non-conventional weapons together with elite KPA units, perhaps emerging from undiscovered tunnels, would cause chaos in the meantime.

From 2013 to 2017, South Korea engaged in a policy called 'trustpolitik', headed by president Park Geun-hye, the daughter of former dictator Park Chung-hee, who turned South Korea into an economic powerhouse. Park Geun-hye, however, was impeached and imprisoned in 2017 for influence peddling. Current president Moon Jae-in has perhaps done better, meeting with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un three times already during 2018.



Images: Corbis



CONFLICT

62 IN THE RANKS

Take a look at some of the key troops that fought in the Korean War

64 BATTLE OF PUSAN PERIMETER

As the United Nations became involved in the conflict, the clashes escalated

68 BATTLE OF INCHON

A daring UN offensive aimed to give South Korea and UN troops a tactical advantage

70 THE BLOODY BATTLE FOR PAKCHON

As the UN tried to turn the communist tide, the bloodshed grew even heavier

74 THE CHOSIN RESERVOIR BREAKOUT

Surrounded, a UN taskforce made a daring escape from the northern mountains

76 OPERATION RIPPER

US Lieutenant General Matthew Ridgway masterminded the retaking of Seoul

80 OUTNUMBERED AND OUTGUNNED

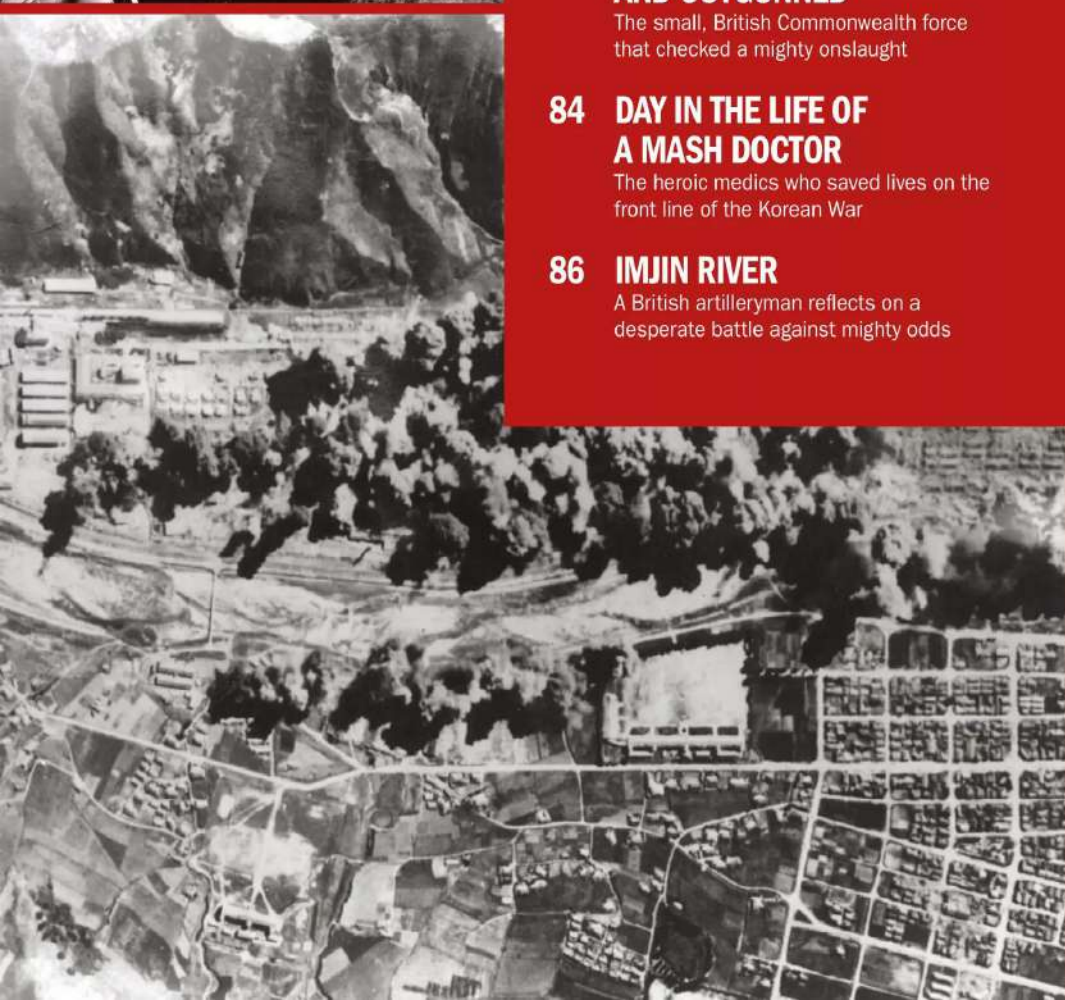
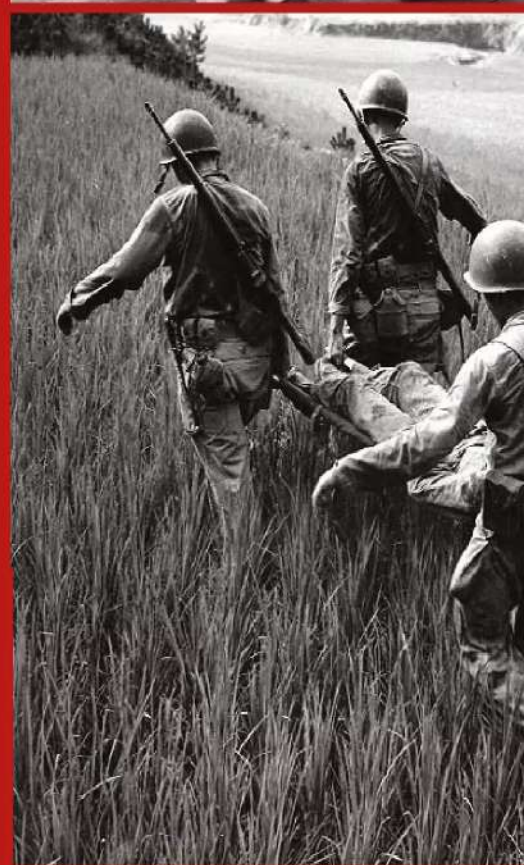
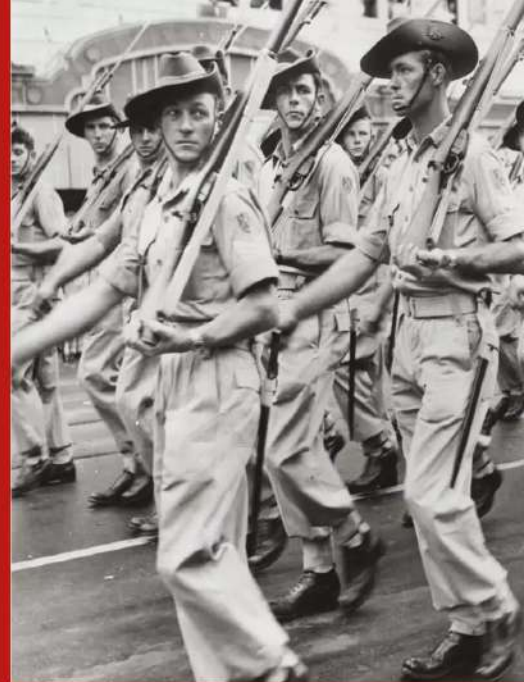
The small, British Commonwealth force that checked a mighty onslaught

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The heroic medics who saved lives on the front line of the Korean War

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A British artilleryman reflects on a desperate battle against mighty odds





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UN forces eventually prevailed in the war of attrition for this piece of high ground

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A small hill among rice paddies that became a bloody focal point

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With attempts at diplomacy increasing, could the conflict finally see an end?



IN THE RANKS

THE WAR PITCHED UN TROOPS INTO BATTLE WITH COMMUNIST FORCES ACROSS TERRITORY THAT WAS FROZEN IN WINTER AND BAKED IN SUMMER

■ PVA soldiers wearing the winter uniform of quilted cotton clothes and a fur-lined hat



PEOPLE'S VOLUNTEER ARMY (PVA) CHINA

Usually drawn from a rural background, or sometimes a Nationalist soldier incorporated from the recently ended civil war, the Chinese foot soldier was known for his endurance and ferocity.

At least 3 million soldiers from the People's Liberation Army (PLA) fought in Korea over three years as the People's Volunteer Army (PVA). To what extent these mostly poor and rural men were genuine volunteers is debatable, but PVA fighters impressed and terrified their enemies.

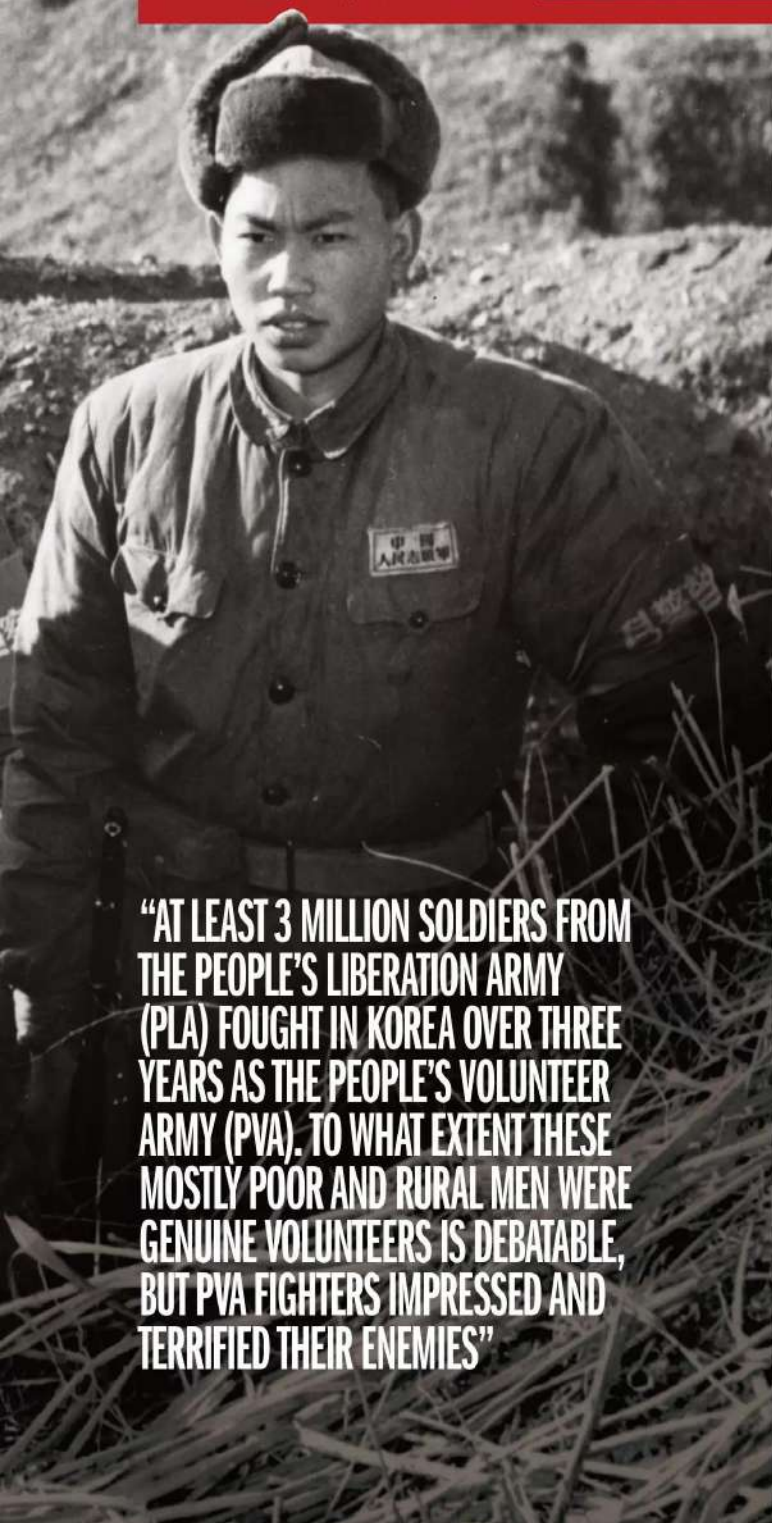
Often attacking at night in human wave assaults heralded by cries and bugles, they suffered dreadful casualties in the face of superior UN artillery and air power. At least 400,000 Chinese troops died either in combat or from exposure and disease. Among them was Mao Anying, the 28-year-old eldest son of the Chinese leader, who was killed in an air strike in November 1950.

The Chinese foot soldier wore a quilted cotton uniform in olive khaki during the winter months, topped by a fur-lined cap with flaps that were tied under the chin. Equipment usually included a waist belt with two or three stick grenades and bandoliers for ammunition and rice. His summer uniform consisted of a Russian-style tunic, trousers and an olive 'Mao' cap. Most early PVA volunteers carried bolt-action rifles or captured US weapons.

EIGHTH ARMY UNITED STATES

The United States entered the Korean War with much of its equipment stocks depleted, to the extent that troops typically fought with World War II era weapons and uniforms. The Eighth Army was established within the Pusan Perimeter by General Walton 'Bulldog' Walker in July 1950. A typical NCO might have seen action in World War II, followed by a post-war stationing in Japan. He would wear a wartime M1943 uniform of windproof cotton sateen and a peaked field cap together with double-buckle combat boots. Weaponry included M-1 carbines.

■ Right: Eighth Army artillerymen in action in 1951. Their weapons and equipment, like the 155mm howitzers pictured, dated from WWII



"AT LEAST 3 MILLION SOLDIERS FROM THE PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY (PLA) FOUGHT IN KOREA OVER THREE YEARS AS THE PEOPLE'S VOLUNTEER ARMY (PVA). TO WHAT EXTENT THESE MOSTLY POOR AND RURAL MEN WERE GENUINE VOLUNTEERS IS DEBATABLE, BUT PVA FIGHTERS IMPRESSED AND TERRIFIED THEIR ENEMIES"

GLOUCESTER REGIMENT UNITED KINGDOM

In August 1950 the Hong Kong-based 27th Brigade was dispatched to Korea, followed by the 29th Brigade in December. An infantry brigade consisted of headquarters, services and three rifle battalions and was 909 men strong. British troops were usually rotated every 12 months. The Gloucesters distinguished themselves on the Imjin River in April 1951, holding back a Chinese push south. Lieutenant Colonel JP Carne earned the Victoria Cross there, having commanded 700 troops against 11,000 PVA. He reportedly experienced attempted 'brainwashing' sessions while a POW.

■ The Gloucester Valley Battle Monument is a memorial to mark the regiment's actions in the Battle of Imjin River



ROYAL AUSTRALIAN REGIMENT AUSTRALIA

At the outset of the war Liberal Prime Minister Robert Menzies committed Australian troops to Korea. 17,000 served there, and 339 were killed in action. In addition, around 1,000 Australian troops with prior military service were asked to re-enlist for three years of service, including one in Korea. The Third Battalion RAR had its first major engagement near Pyongyang in October 1950 and fought numerous battles along the 38th parallel. The RAR soldier was distinctive for his wide-brimmed 'Digger' hat, augmented later on by US flak jackets and field uniforms similar to other Commonwealth troops.



■ Distinctive Australian soldiers march through Sydney before deployment to Korea

Image: Alamy, Getty

■ After participating in the capture of a position above the Nakdong River, two US Marines survey the countryside near Pusan

BATTLE OF PUSAN PERIMETER

THE DEFENCE OF THE PUSAN PERIMETER AGAINST COMMUNIST FORCES BOUGHT TIME TO TURN THE TIDE OF THE KOREAN WAR

WORDS WILLIAM E WELSH

PUSAN, SOUTH KOREA 4 AUGUST – 18 SEPTEMBER 1950

Without warning, a tidal wave of the North Korean People's Army swept across the 38th parallel on 25 June 1950, invading neighbouring South Korea. Communist forces routed the unprepared South Korean units in their path and swept from victory to victory.

Within three days, the communists, nearly 100,000 strong, had taken the South Korean capital of Seoul. As a result, the United Nations Security Council authorised military assistance to South Korea to eject the invaders. The US Far East Command, under General Douglas MacArthur, took charge of the effort, but the task would be arduous.

While South Korean forces fell back steadily before the onslaught, the nearest available American troops belonged to the Eighth Army in Japan, under the command of General Walton H Walker. Undermanned and without much of its equipment due to post-World War II budget cuts and downsizing, the 24th Infantry Division was deployed to the Korean peninsula in early July. By mid-month, the First Cavalry and 25th Infantry Divisions had arrived. The immediate task of the American troops and their South Korean allies was to slow the North Korean advance, buying time for MacArthur to marshal forces to mount a counteroffensive.

As the North Koreans rolled forward, the UN forces fought delaying actions, but the enemy was relentless. Task Force Smith, the first American combat contingent in Korea, was overmatched. Its 500 soldiers were outnumbered ten to one, and they had

no tanks. North Korean troops and armour overwhelmed the Americans. They slashed on to victories at Chuncheon, Chochiwon and the Kum River. By the end of July, the key towns of Taejon and Yongdong had fallen. The North Korean objective was the major South Korean port city of Pusan on the Tsushima Strait and the East China Sea. It was the port of entry for UN reinforcements, equipment and supplies, and it had to be held at all costs.

General Walker had hoped to slow the North Korean onslaught west of the Nakdong River but he was rapidly running out of real estate. By the end of July, he had pulled east of the river. As he established the defensive positions that came to be known as the Pusan Perimeter, Walker issued a stirring statement, later called his "stand or die order".

The general told his command: "We are fighting a battle against time. There will be no more retreating, withdrawal or readjustment of the lines or any other term you choose. There is no line behind us to which we can retreat [...] There will be no Dunkirk; no Bataan. A retreat to Pusan would be one of the greatest butcheries in history. We must fight until the end [...] We will fight as a team. If some of us must die, we will die fighting together [...] I want everybody to understand we are going to hold this line. We are going to win."

The Pusan Perimeter was the last line of defence for South Korea and the UN troops. It encompassed 220 kilometres in the extreme southeastern corner of the peninsula. Walker was forced to defend an area many times larger than his command could adequately cover.

"WITHIN THREE DAYS, THE COMMUNISTS, NEARLY 100,000 STRONG, HAD TAKEN THE SOUTH KOREAN CAPITAL OF SEOUL. AS A RESULT, THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL AUTHORISED MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO SOUTH KOREA"



THE DEATH OF GENERAL WALKER

General Walton H Walker, the bulldog-tough commander at the Pusan Perimeter, died in an auto accident in December 1950

Pugnacious Lieutenant General Walton H Walker executed a brilliant defensive campaign against the invading North Koreans at the Pusan Perimeter. Due to a lack of immediate command structure, much of the field responsibilities fell to Walker, who maintained contact with his subordinates via light aircraft and his speedy Jeep.

When the crisis had passed and the Eighth Army assumed the offensive, Walker pursued the linkup with X Corps rather than encircling and annihilating the bulk of the North Korean forces dangerously exposed in the south. Despite his superb handling of the Eighth Army during difficult days, some analysts called for his removal. To compound the issues surrounding his command, the Chinese intervention in November 1950 caught Walker – and the rest of the UN leadership – unprepared.

Walker's unquestioned bravery and leadership were recognised with the Distinguished Service Cross, but his removal from field command was already a strong probability when tragedy struck. On 23 December 1950, the general was killed when his Jeep collided with a South Korean Army weapons carrier on an icy road. His son, Captain Sam Sims Walker, escorted his body back to the United States for burial at Arlington National Cemetery. Walton Walker was promoted posthumously to the rank of full general.



■ General Walker commanded the hard-pressed UN forces that held the Pusan Perimeter against repeated North Korean attacks



● Soldiers of the US 24th Infantry Division prepare to roll forward aboard trucks during the Pusan Perimeter fighting

Therefore, he determined that the best course of action would be to utilise the traditional logistical principle of interior lines to the maximum, transferring reserve formations to threatened positions and employing a mobile defensive tactic.

Walker could also rely on the US Air Force's mastery of the skies, interdicting enemy troop movements and logistics around the clock. The US Navy was unchallenged at sea; its air support and gunfire were reliable and on time and target. Pusan was capable of handling thousands of tons of cargo in a month's time, and a well-maintained rail line served the general area from the port to the important towns of Taegu, Miryang, and Pohang-dong.

The imperative for the UN forces was to stand their ground against a daunting force of North Korean troops and tanks flush with victory. Within days of establishing the perimeter, Walker began receiving reinforcements. While the fighting raged, the US Army's Second Infantry Division and Fifth Regimental Combat Team, the First Provisional Marine Brigade, and the British 27th Commonwealth Brigade joined the five depleted South Korean divisions and UN forces already inside the perimeter. The UN numbers eventually swelled to more than 90,000, actually superior to that of the enemy, which had taken heavy casualties and fielded about 70,000 combat troops in more than nine infantry divisions and an armored division.

Throughout the month of August, the North Koreans attacked the Pusan Perimeter, often at multiple points simultaneously. The initial effort was repulsed as six enemy divisions pressed the western flank while others assaulted the northern frontier.

On 5 August, a coordinated attack at four separate points along the UN line sought to outflank Walker's left. He responded with the first UN counterattack of the Korean War. Assembling Task Force Kean, commanded by General William B Kean, he sent the combined Army-Marine unit against the enemy Sixth Division at Chinju on 7 August. Task Force Kean blunted the North Korean thrust and was withdrawn as further offensive operations were expected to produce little.

At the same time, the North Koreans threatened the centre of the UN line with five divisions and tank support. Deftly shifting elements of the US 27th Infantry Regiment and the First Marine Brigade to support the 24th Division, the defenders protected Taegu and the vital rail line. A counterattack on 17 August reduced an area of penetration called the Naktong Bulge.

Perhaps the weakest point in the Pusan Perimeter was its pronounced angle in the northwest where it turned eastward toward the coastline. Heavy North Korean attacks caved in this vulnerable position, and two defending South Korean divisions were pushed back into the operational area of the 1st Cavalry. The UN headquarters was relocated from Taegu to Pusan, but there was little ground to give.

Again, the 27th Regiment was on the move, joining with the First South Korean Division to stabilise the front. General Walker fed more reinforcements into the threatened zone and the defenders occupied high ground that

AN AIRMAN'S SACRIFICE

Major Louis J Sebillé flew support missions above the Pusan Perimeter and died in a heroic act of sacrifice

The air superiority that the US Air Force and Navy established above the Pusan Perimeter contributed mightily to the eventual UN victory. From Fifth Air Force bases in Japan and Korea and the decks of aircraft carriers off the Korean coast, airmen flew countless sorties.

Among the first of the brave American pilots to support ground troops at the Pusan Perimeter was Air Force Major Louis J Sebillé. Commanding the 67th Fighter Squadron, on 5 August 1950 he was ordered to lead a flight of three North American P-51 Mustang fighters in a sweep against an enemy troop movement. The aircraft were equipped for tactical support, and in addition to their .50-calibre machine guns each carried two 500-pound (226.8-kilogram) bombs along with rockets.

After spotting an armoured enemy column, Sebillé led the ensuing attack. On the first pass, he attempted to drop both bombs, but only one released, rendering the aircraft unstable. Nevertheless, Sebillé turned for a second run. As he made a sweeping turn, his plane was hit by anti-aircraft fire. Rather than head towards an emergency landing strip at Taegu, he crashed into the enemy column, killing scores of North Korean troops and destroying many of their vehicles. For his heroic act, Sebillé received a posthumous Medal of Honor.



■ Major Sebillé stands next to a jet aircraft at a base in Korea. Sebillé received the Medal of Honor

blocked the enemy route of advance. The fighting lasted a week, and the area came to be known as the Bowling Alley.

Intense North Korean pressure on the northern shoulder of the perimeter nearly succeeded in breaking through the thin defensive line. Tremendous naval gunfire and incessant air attacks supported South Korean troops on the ground as they fell back before enemy spearheads down the coast toward the port of Pusan. The enemy thrust penetrated 40.2 kilometres and reduced the perimeter to about half its earlier territory.

Despite the enemy's punishing blows, the UN forces had managed to hold at Pusan into late August. At the end of the month, however, the enemy launched its last bid for total victory in Korea. Their supply lines stretched to the breaking point, the North Koreans had also absorbed tremendous casualties. Their 105th Armored Division had lost nearly all its vehicles and was down to only a handful of tanks, while replacement troops were not of the fighting quality of those that had been lost.

On 27 August, the North Koreans launched a coordinated attack that compelled the defenders to fight at multiple points at the same time. Determined to defend the lifeline at Pusan, the UN forces fell back from Pohang-dong as the enemy cut the road from Taegu. A critical situation worsened as the Second Infantry Division withdrew toward Yongsan and the 25th Infantry Division line was breached in the enemy's drive toward Masan.

Reserves were again deployed to hotspots, and the determined defense of Pusan began to slow the North Koreans. The Second Infantry Division and First Marine Brigade moved against the Naktong Bulge again, and the 24th

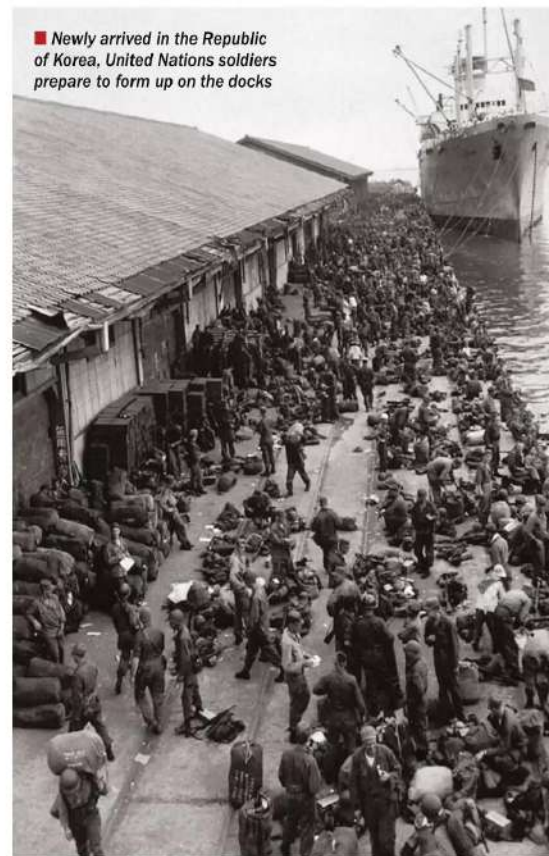
Infantry Division moved up to support South Korean forces in the north. The attackers exhausted themselves on the defensive positions, their ammunition and foodstuffs rapidly depleted, and constant air attacks by the UN forces eroded combat effectiveness. By 12 September, the communist offensive had finally been stalled completely.

Three days later, the counteroffensive that the haggard stalwarts of the Pusan Perimeter had fought for erupted far to the northwest at Inchon, where General MacArthur executed a bold amphibious landing that threatened enemy communications and supply lines while potentially cutting off the North Korean forces deep in South Korean territory.

They had fought for their lives for more than two months, but the breakout from the Pusan Perimeter meant to coincide with the Inchon landings gained momentum as the North Koreans began to withdraw on 22 September. Eighth Army drove northward to link up with the UN X Corps four days later.

The costly Battle of the Pusan Perimeter was over, but the war dragged on for three more years. The butcher's bill was high for both sides. North Korean casualties are estimated at more than 60,000 killed, wounded and captured. The South Koreans suffered up to 40,000 lost, and nearly 4,300 Americans were dead, 12,377 wounded, and 2,500 missing and taken prisoner.

■ Newly arrived in the Republic of Korea, United Nations soldiers prepare to form up on the docks



“THE UN NUMBERS EVENTUALLY SWELLED TO MORE THAN 90,000, ACTUALLY SUPERIOR TO THAT OF THE ENEMY, WHICH HAD TAKEN HEAVY CASUALTIES”

■ American Marines carry a wounded comrade on a stretcher after a firefight with North Korean forces at the Pusan Perimeter



BATTLE OF INCHON

THE CALCULATED RISK OF AN AMPHIBIOUS LANDING AT INCHON TURNED THE TIDE OF THE KOREAN WAR

WORDS MIKE HASKEW

INCHON, SOUTH KOREA 15-19 SEPTEMBER 1950

While the US Eighth Army and other United Nations troops fought for their lives at the Pusan Perimeter, General Douglas MacArthur was finalising the plans for a daring masterstroke to relieve the beleaguered defenders and turn the tide of the Korean War.

Weeks after their surprise invasion of neighbouring South Korea on 25 June 1950, North Korean forces assailed the defences at Pusan, the vital port where UN reinforcements and supplies were offloaded and rushed to the front lines. MacArthur, supreme commander of UN forces in Korea, needed time to plan his counteroffensive, and the brave soldiers of Pusan bought that time in blood.

Overcoming objections from numerous staff and senior officers, MacArthur planned an amphibious landing at Inchon in the northwest of the Korean Peninsula, 40 kilometres from the South Korean capital of Seoul. The operation was fraught with risk. Despite the fact that the tides at Inchon varied up to a maximum of 11 metres, only two narrow channels approached the landing beaches and these were likely to be heavily mined. On top of this was the fact that the currents were swift at 5.5 to 14.8 kilometres per hour. Even so, the element of surprise favoured the attackers. The North Koreans would not expect a landing, and MacArthur believed the gamble presented the best opportunity for success.

Eventually, 75,000 troops of the US First Marine Division and the US Army's Seventh Infantry Division took part in the counterstrike, code-named Operation Chromite, on 15 September 1950. Prior to the landings, special forces scouted the beaches at Inchon and the island of Wolmi-do in the harbour. Deceptive airstrikes and manoeuvres were executed at other locations to keep the North Koreans off balance. As D-day approached, the invasion fleet under US Navy Admiral Arthur D Struble moved into position and the UN X Corps, commanded by Major General Edward Almond, made final preparations to splash ashore.

Heavy air and naval bombardments preceded the landings, and at 6:30am the Third Battalion, Fifth Marines, under Lieutenant Colonel Robert Taplett, hit Green Beach on Wolmi-do supported by nine M26 heavy tanks of the First Marine Tank Battalion. By noon the island was secured, with 200 North Koreans killed and 136 taken prisoner. The Marines suffered only 14 casualties.

After waiting several hours for favourable tides, Lieutenant Colonel Raymond L Murray led the Marines' Regimental Combat Team 5 ashore at Red Beach, securing a lodgment that encompassed surrounding high ground and opening the causeway from Wolmi-do to link up with the Third Battalion. Casualties at Red Beach were light as well; only eight Marines were killed and 28 wounded. Further south, the First Marine Regiment, under Lieutenant



■ Red Beach is crowded with reinforcements and equipment on the day after the initial landings at Inchon



■ Marine Lieutenant Baldomero Lopez scales the seawall at Inchon moments before he is killed in action. He received the Medal of Honor

AN AMERICAN ICON

MacArthur remains one of the most divisive commanders in US military history

General Douglas MacArthur's risky Inchon operation paid great dividends. He solicited support and justified the undertaking with a stern statement: "The only alternative to a stroke such as I propose will be the continuation of the savage sacrifice we are making at Pusan, with no hope of relief in sight. Are you content to let our troops stay in that bloody perimeter like beef cattle in the slaughterhouse? Who will take the responsibility for such a tragedy? Certainly, I will not."

Despite his success at Inchon, he failed to recognise the warning signs of Chinese intervention in the Korean War, which cost UN forces dearly. MacArthur openly criticised the "limited war" policies of President Truman, who relieved the general of duty on 11 April 1951. Eight days later, MacArthur addressed a joint session of the US Congress and quoted a line from a timeworn barracks ballad: "Old soldiers never die; they just fade away."

It was the end of a controversial 61-year career for the vain, outspoken MacArthur, which included receiving the Medal of Honor, command of American troops in the South Pacific during World War II, a dramatic return to the Philippine Islands in 1944, and the postwar administration of Japan.



■ MacArthur conceived the risky landing at Inchon that reversed UN fortunes in the Korean War

Colonel Lewis B 'Chesty' Puller, came ashore at Blue Beach to secure the road to the village of Yeongdeungpo and beyond toward Seoul.

On the morning of 16 September, the Americans and attached South Korean troops entered Inchon and cleared the city. The North Koreans had been caught completely off guard. They scrambled to respond but their counterattack was shredded by the Vought F4U Corsair fighter-bombers of Marine Fighter Squadron 214 (VMF-214) and a rapid thrust by M26 tanks with Marine infantry support.

The next day, the Marines hammered another attempted counterattack, destroying a force of 200 troops and six Soviet-made T-34 tanks. They also secured the vital Kimpo airfield without a fight as the North Koreans fled, which allowed Seabees (Construction Battalions) and combat engineers to prepare the base for offensive air operations. On 18 September, the Seventh Infantry Division began landing at Inchon and soon joined the Marines in the battle for Seoul.

Coinciding with an Eighth Army offensive at Pusan, MacArthur's gamble at Inchon was a resounding success. Their lines of supply and communications severed, the North Koreans were compelled to retreat. The withdrawal became a rout, and an estimated 35,000 enemy soldiers were killed or captured. In contrast, the victory at Inchon had cost UN forces 566 killed and 2,713 wounded.

UN forces continued their offensive, crossing the 38th parallel into North Korea and capturing Pyongyang on 19 October. The advance proceeded toward the Yalu River, the North Korean border with China. The unexpected intervention of Chinese ground troops in November led to a UN withdrawal and stalemate. The armistice that ended the fighting was not signed until June 1953.

THE BLOODY BATTLE FOR PAKCHON

ALMOST TWO WEEKS AFTER THE FIRST CHINESE OFFENSIVE, SOUTH KOREA AND THE UNITED NATIONS AIMED TO HALT THE COMMUNIST TIDE

WORDS DOM RESEIGH-LINCOLN

PAKCHON, NORTH KOREA 5 NOVEMBER 1950

When North Korea invaded its southern neighbour on 25th June 1950, it plunged the peninsula into a bloody and brutal war of attrition. It was a conflict of small gains and terrible losses on either side, with the North Koreans (aided by the communist support of the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China) often trading advances and retreats with the United Nations-supported South.

This war of inches was indicative of most of its major skirmishes and battles, including the heavy death toll of the Battle of Pakchon. The encounter took place a month after one of the biggest flashpoints in the conflict, when the People's Volunteer Army (PVA) launched a surprise invasion that bolstered North Korean forces, while the Soviet Union provided a deadly wave of air support. Known as the First Phase Offensive, the vast invasion force battered the United Nations forces that entered the war in August 1950 and halted their advance towards the tactically significant Yalu River.

In the months that followed, the United Nations forces - comprised mostly of British and Australian infantrymen from the 27th British Commonwealth Brigade and a contingent of US armour - exchanged a number of wins and losses with the Chinese and the North Koreans, including a routing loss at Usnan and the taking of the North Korean city of Chongju. As November began in earnest,

British and Australian troops were ordered to fall back to reinforce the western flank of the US Eight Army as it fought to hold back the Chinese offensive. More importantly, the UN needed to protect a vitally important road and concrete bridge running along the Chongchon River that would enable the UN to bring in both reinforcements and supplies. In short, losing this road would be catastrophic.

RED TIDE

For the United Nations, it was time to take stock of its numbers and stand firm on North Korean soil. For the makeshift communist alliance, there was the scent of blood in the water, and it sent its forces like blades right into the heart of its Western enemies. The UN had fortified a position in and around the small village of Pakchon, and it would here that they would face a force that vastly outnumbered them. Under the command of Wu Xinquan and Zhang Jiecheng (two generals who had already marshalled great success against the UN), a force consisting of 1,500 mostly Chinese infantry marched on the village. The UN contingent numbered roughly 300, with Generals Basil Aubrey Coad commanding the British, Floyd Wash the Australians, and Howard Moore overseeing the small American presence in the area.

In order to best defend the village, Coad's British troops were ordered to defend the lower

■ The Battle of Pakchon took place ten days after the beginning of the First Chinese Offensive, with over 1,500 infantry marching on the beleaguered village

"THIS WAR OF INCHES WAS INDICATIVE OF MOST OF ITS MAJOR SKIRMISHES AND BATTLES, INCLUDING THE HEAVY DEATH TOLL OF THE BATTLE OF PAKCHON"



A HEAVY PRICE

The Battle of Pakchon was a bloody affair that saw significant losses in the aftermath

While it was one of many battles fought across the three-year-long Korean War, both sides suffered considerable losses by the time the battle had drawn to a close on 6 November. Records show that 84 British, American and Australian soldiers lost their lives while 14 were wounded. It means the UN forces ordered to protect Pakchon lost a third of their troops in just over a day. A large number of those killed were Australian and British, and in recognition of their sacrifice that day, the Royal Australian Regiment and Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders were later granted the battle honour 'Pakchon'.

It's estimated that around 270 Chinese and North Korean soldiers lost their lives between 5 and 6 November in the Battle of Pakchon, with a further 200 or so injured. These figures are a rough estimation provided by Australian forces, as the PVA made a concerted effort to remove many of its dead in the aftermath. Nevertheless, it's a far higher number compared to those suffered by the United Nations, but the communist forces were also greater in number and had well over 1,000 able-bodied men ready to continue the march to drive the United Nations out of North Korea.



■ The Chinese and the North Koreans were quick to remove large numbers of their dead from the battlefield, so estimates for their respective losses are just that



■ Australian troops march in their home country before being deployed to the Korean War in 1950

crossings of the Taeryong and Chongchon rivers, effectively forming a rearguard of sorts while simultaneously supporting the US 24th Infantry Division to the east. Machine gunner and mortar teams belonging to Walsh's 3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (3 RAR) were positioned astride the road to the north of the village. However, despite their preparations, the Chinese and the North Koreans were closing in and were ready to strike at the UN troops with full force.

UN numbers were spread thin around the village and in defence of the road and bridge, and in the early hours of the morning on 5th November the PVA attacked the 24th Infantry Division like a spear, forcing its position back two kilometres and bloodying its nose for good measure. China and North Korea wanted to inflict damage on the UN's most powerful weapons – its tanks – and in doing so hoped to strike a decisive blow to tactical fluidity. A contingent of Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders helped repel the attack, but it was clear that the PVA was using aggressive tactics designed to strike the UN forces like a hammer until it found a weakness.

Having forced the Americans to give up just over a mile of territory, pushing them further back to Pakchon, Wu Xinquan and Zhang Jiecheng ordered a large section of the attacking forces to peel off and march west – with the intention of threatening the British and Australian rearguard with further violence. Around 8:00am that morning 200 Chinese infantry attacked the C Battery, US 61st Field Artillery Battalion positioned on a ridgeline 1.9 miles south of the village. The weakening of this artillery was a huge boon for the Chinese and the North Koreans and made the south road to Pakchon vulnerable to further attack.

THE AFTERMATH OF PAKCHON

What happened next after that fateful encounter along the Chongchon River between China, North Korea and the United Nations

Despite the Chinese PVA withdrawal from the area, it would be a considerable amount of time before peace returned to Pakchon. On 7 December, with Chinese and North Korean forces in partial retreat to the north, an attempted plan to re-assault the village from the rear was discovered and quickly dismantled by the Australians and the British. The area's flanks were reinforced and that vitally important supply road was secured.

The death toll incurred by the Chinese and the North Koreans may have small in comparison to its wider force, but the estimated loss of over 200 soldiers reduced their tactical options and forced commanders to adopt a far less aggressive and a far more cautious approach to engagements. More importantly, since most of the casualties were PVA, this communist ally was forced to mostly pull out of the area, leaving further offensives up to the North Koreans. Much of the success of the defence of Pakchon was attributed to the grit and determination of the British and Australian forces, but these defenders began to suffer greatly (especially the older members of 3 RAR) when the bitterly cold days of winter set in shortly after.



■ While approaching their offensives with more caution following their defeat at Pakchon, Chinese and North Korean troops would eventually return and claim the area

WALSH'S ERROR

Air support also played a role during the conflict, with both British and Australian planes taking to the skies above Pakchon. This battle also marked one of the few instances where the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) was deployed in North Korea to support its infantry on the ground, with four Mustangs of 77 Squadron performing bombing runs on enemy positions while duelling with air support provided by the Soviet Union. Australian forces from 3 RAR were sent to counter-attack and claim another strategically important ridgeline east of the village, and after two hours of bloody exchanges, the Chinese were forced back to the ridgeline.

During this time, refugees fleeing the area passed the village, causing UN commanders to fear that China and North Korea would use the throng of civilians to infiltrate the village. Considering UN forces would later discover demolition charges among the enemy dead, it was a legitimate concern. Meanwhile, Walsh decided to move a contingent of the Australian machine gunners and mortar teams further back towards the village amid concerns of another Chinese counter-attack, but failed to communicate this move to his fellow commanders. Identifying a weakness, the enemy launched an assault around 8:00pm, forcing the Australian forces to retreat much

further back, losing the vitally important ridgelines they were previously controlling.

Walsh's error in judgement and his failure to communicate proved to be one of the biggest technical missteps on the part of the United Nations, and both the British and the Australians lost considerable territorial advantages as they were forced back and away from the tactical overlook of the ridges. The PVA soldiers were skilled at using the rolling hills of the area to outflank, and used this method to inflict losses on the United Nations. Coad, having learned of Walsh's foolish error, ordered 3 RAR to return to the ridges they'd previously vacated, since leaving them undefended would leave the south road and the concrete bridge vulnerable.

However, despite the loss in territory, the use of mortar fire and the redeployment of infantry around the paddy fields to the north enabled the British and Australians to hold back the PVA offensive and reclaim some – but not all – of the ridges lost in Walsh's partial retreat. As a result of his actions, Coad removed Walsh from his position and passed command of 3 RAR to Lieutenant Colonel Bruce Ferguson as its new CO (commanding officer) the following morning. Despite a heavy PVA resistance, the small number of Australian forces held out, and as the morning of 6 November wore on it was clear the communists were withdrawing, their blunt force trauma tactics having failed to crack the far smaller forces of the UN.

loss of life endured by the Commonwealth nation since its arrival on North Korean soil. A great deal of the problems encountered by the Australian contingent came down to a lack of communication and consistent tactics. While some companies pulled back, leaving holes in the UN defence, others – such as the 2nd Australian Imperial Force – held onto their position in the hope of better conditions. That resilience proved vital and helped the UN inflict heavy casualties on the aggressive waves of Chinese and North Korean infantry that attempted to flank Pakchon.

With the PVA forces now checked and in open retreat, the remaining British and Australian troops and working US armour were able to properly secure the Chongchon road leading south from Pakchon, and ensure the UN held onto a vitally important logistical landmark on North Korean soil. The opening was also used to mount small attacks on the remaining Chinese patrols and ensure those outer ridgelines stayed in UN hands. However, while the considerable losses suffered by the PVA at Pakchon would force them to re-evaluate their tactics, a renewed push as part of the Second Phase Offensive in late November would ultimately see them eventually driven from the area as the UN were pushed back out of the country and onto the 38th parallel. The Battle of Pakchon was finished, but the war in Korea was far from over...



■ A mortar crew from 3 RAR setting up ordnance at the Battle of Pakchon on 5 November 1950

TRUE SACRIFICE

Up until this point, the Australians of 3 RAR had suffered considerable casualties, with 12 killed and a further 64 wounded – the worst

“AIR SUPPORT ALSO PLAYED A ROLE DURING THE CONFLICT, WITH BOTH BRITISH AND AUSTRALIAN PLANES TAKING TO THE SKIES ABOVE PAKCHON”

■ Today Pakchon, with its rolling hills and plains, provides vital and scarce farmland for North Korea. Farm workers live in this collective housing



THE CHOSIN RESERVOIR BREAKOUT

A UN TASKFORCE FACED ANNIHILATION AFTER A SUDDEN AND MASSIVE ENCIRCLEMENT BY CHINESE TROOPS IN THE FREEZING MOUNTAINS OF NORTH KOREA

CHANGJIN COUNTY, NORTH KOREA 27 NOVEMBER - 13 DECEMBER 1950

Located in North Korea's South Hamgyong Province, the Changjin Reservoir had been renamed the Chosin Reservoir by the Japanese. The 'Frozen Chosin' became the setting for a remorseless siege and breakout during the winter of 1950, when the US Army's X Corps and US Marines faced the full might of the Chinese People's Volunteer Army (PVA), sent into Korea on the orders of Chairman Mao.

The PVA's Ninth Army Group was led by General Song Shi-Lun and was comprised of around 120,000 troops. Facing them was a force of around 30,000 UN troops comprised of American, South Korean and British forces, with General Edward Almond in charge of X Corps while General Oliver Smith commanded First Marine Division.

Following the Inchon landings, North Korea's armies had been cut in half: after weeks of siege, the US Eighth Army was able to break out of the Pusan Perimeter in south-east Korea. The North Koreans fell back as X Corps and Eighth Army marched north towards the Yalu River, which forms the Chinese-North Korean border.

By late October 1950 Mao's forces were about to intervene on the side of North Korea. The PVA would rely on tactics that had served them well during the civil war against China's Nationalists: human wave attacks, ambushes and rapid mobility. Although the UN march north was thrown into reverse, the Chosin campaign was a pyrrhic victory for the Chinese. The PVA had 50,000 casualties to 17,000 UN casualties, and the Chinese Ninth Army was crippled,

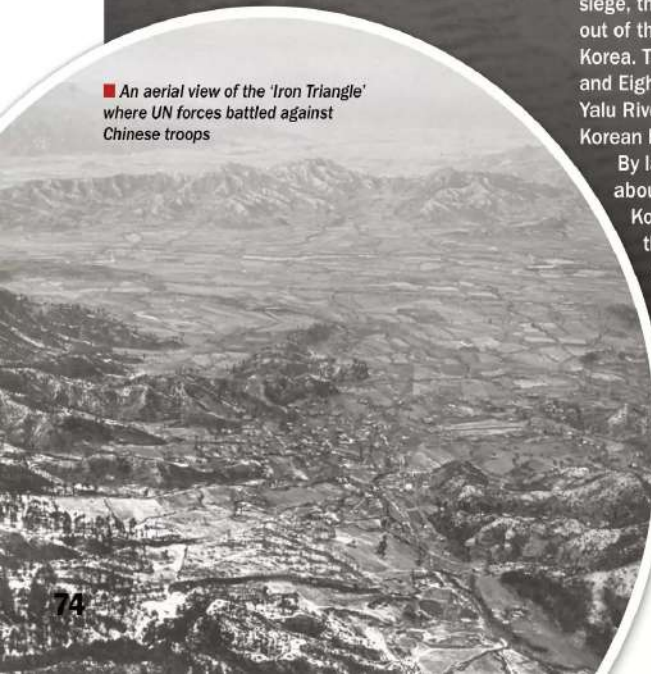
not returning to battle for nearly two years. Thereafter, the original UN objective of a unified non-communist Korea was abandoned in favour of defending South Korea against a renewed communist occupation.

Prior to the battle, the UN supreme commander Douglas MacArthur anticipated ending the Korean War by Christmas. With Eighth Army moving towards the Yalu River and clashes taking place, a plan was formed to position X Corps around the reservoir, north of and behind the PVA as it moved to face Eighth Army.

But the PVA's Ninth Army attacked at four points. They laid siege to the First Division at the villages of Yudam-ni, Hagaru-ri and Koto-ri, but the marines held out for three days. East of the reservoir, however, a US-South Korean contingent called Taskforce McLean was overrun, with just a few hundred survivors making it to Hagaru-ri, some crossing the ice of the reservoir.

On 29 November, MacArthur decreed that Almond and Smith's forces needed to break out and make a 78-mile (125 kilometre) trek to the port city of Hungnam on the east coast. Backed up by massive airstrikes, the breakout commenced on 6 December with US marines fighting their way from Yudam-ni and Hagaru-ri to reunite at Koto-ri. The fighting

■ An aerial view of the 'Iron Triangle' where UN forces battled against Chinese troops





■ UN troops returning from the Kumwha River, which was a major focal point in the battles for the 'Iron Triangle' during a period of military stalemate

"THE FIGHTING TOOK PLACE IN TEMPERATURES THAT APPROACHED MINUS 40 DEGREES FAHRENHEIT, AND X CORPS RECORDED 7,338 CASES OF FROSTBITE"

took place in temperatures that approached -40 degrees Celsius, and X Corps recorded 7,338 cases of frostbite. The soil was so hard that the construction of dugouts was only possible with dynamite. Moreover, in places the mountain passes were only wide enough for a single vehicle to pass. At the village of Koto-ri the troops discovered that the PVA had blown up the bridge over the crucial Funchilin Pass. The US Air Force was able to parachute-drop eight portable bridge sections to allow for a temporary working bridge to be assembled.

Thousands of Korean civilians accompanied X Corps and First Marines as they approached Hungnam. The UN forces reached the port city on 11 December, by which time the PVA had fallen back, having failed in the objective of surrounding and annihilating the enemy. An armada of 193 ships waited to evacuate the UN forces and 98,000 civilians. Within days, Operation Christmas Cargo evacuated them en masse to South Korea. Chinese troops entered the city on Christmas Day.

With Eighth Army also in retreat further west, the UN would not return to North Korea. But the escape from Chosin had avoided a far greater rout. It was famously described by General Smith: 'Retreat Hell! We're not retreating. We're just advancing in a different direction.'

THE MASH UNITS

The mobile army surgical hospitals provided vital and rapid support to frontline troops and improved the fatality rate

The Mobile Army Surgical Hospitals (MASH) inspired the 1970 hit movie of the same name, directed by Robert Altman, and a long-running sitcom. Both were based on the experiences of Richard Hornberger, who wrote a satirical novel about his experiences in Korea in 1968.

Seven MASH units operated in Korea at various stages of the war. The first was set up on 6 July 1950 in Pusan. The concept of a mobile field hospital had been established immediately after World War II on 23 August 1945. Each MASH unit was planned as a 60-bed truck-borne hospital that could be disassembled and moved

at six hours' notice. They typically operated around 20 miles (32 kilometres) behind the fighting and were served by four Bell H-13 helicopters. By Christmas 1950 there were four MASH units in Korea, sometimes serving 400 patients per day. Within a few months they had been enlarged to 200 beds and were augmented by 'Normash' – the Norwegians performing a non-combat role in the UN mission. Helicopter mobility, along with superior surgical and post operative care, paid off. The fatality rate for wounded American soldiers dropped from 4.5 per cent in World War II to 2.5 per cent in Korea.

■ A Mobile Army Surgical Hospital (MASH) unit that provided emergency surgery for helicopter-evacuated troops wounded in battle



OPERATION RIPPER

SOUTH KOREA'S CAPITAL SEOUL WAS DEVASTATED AS IT CHANGED HANDS BETWEEN COMMUNIST AND UN FORCES DURING THE CONFLICT. A PERILOUS PUSH WOULD DECIDE ITS FATE FOR GOOD

WORDS ROBERT MURPHY

CHUNCHEON, SOUTH KOREA 7 MARCH - 4 APRIL 1951

Seoul today is a sparkling city of high-rise steel, glass opulence and booming business. A 'Tiger' city of the East where rampant consumerism meets historical Confucianism, South Korea's capital is the global headquarters for multinational firms including Samsung, LG and Hyundai. 10 million people live in a metropolis that gives few clues about its bloody history.

Less than seven decades ago Seoul was on its knees, ravaged by the Korean War. Buildings destroyed and its people dead or fleeing, Seoul's population reduced from a million and a half to less than 200,000. In March 1951, Seoul was in the hands of the Chinese Communist People's Volunteer Army (PVA) and the Korean People's Army (KPA).

Communist forces first invaded, taking the city in June the previous year. Using Blitzkrieg-type tactics with Soviet T-34 tanks supported by artillery, the North Korean forces had pushed south across the 38th parallel, into Seoul and its defenceless population.

Syngman Rhee, the South Korean president, declared: "Every Cabinet member, including myself, will protect the government, and parliament has decided to remain in Seoul. Citizens should not worry and remain in their workplaces." The following day he deserted the city. And the day after that, his army prematurely blew up the Handang Bridge across the city's river while 4,000 refugees were on it. Up to 1,000 died, and it cut off the retreat route for the South Korean Fifth Division. Seoul became the bloody focus of a Korean tug-of-war.

United Nations forces, mostly American, regained control in September 1950, engaging in house-to-house fighting up the main Ma Po Boulevard. The former tea shops and grocery stores had been fortified with terrifying

Communist anti-tank guns and land mines. But after Chinese attacks along the 38th parallel, the new commander of the 8th US Army, the charismatic Lieutenant General Matthew Ridgway, ordered the evacuation, fearing heavy losses.

By early 1951 Seoul was once again in the hands of the communist forces. The city had now swapped sides four times in a matter of months.

After regrouping, Lt Gen Ridgway formulated Operation Killer. He gave it that name because that was the overriding ambition: to destroy as many communist soldiers as possible.

Heading north in early March, progress was slow at first, more down to terrain than resistance, then quickened its pace to reach its goal – a phase line Ridgway called 'Line Arizona' to the east of Seoul.

He had gained territory, but if the see-saw conflict of the Korean War proved anything, it was that land could be gained and lost. Enemy soldiers could always fight again. He needed casualties. After two weeks' fighting, Operation Killer had seen around 8,000 communist soldiers dead and 1,500 injured. Not enough, concluded Ridgway.

That's when he devised 'Operation Ripper'.

It had two main objectives: firstly, to achieve the enemy bloodshed that Operation Killer had failed to provide. And secondly, to outflank Seoul, leaving the Chinese communist forces the choice to defend from a weakened position or to withdraw.

The US I Corps and IX Corps would progress from the west, while X Corps and Republic of Korea III Corps would advance from the east. Conditions were freezing. Soldiers found themselves knee-deep in snow and the terrain was mountainous and treacherous, with wooded hills, rushing streams and roads barely more than tracks.

■ The operation to destroy as many communist forces as possible was hampered more by the freezing, mountainous territory than the enemy's fighting spirit



OPERATION RIPPER'S MASTERMIND

When Lt General Matthew Ridgway took control of the 8th Army in 1950, it was still in retreat. He masterminded its renewed push to repel Chinese and North Korean forces back above the 38th parallel

Lt General Matthew Ridgway was working at the Pentagon in 1950 when the 8th Army's general was killed. He was a graduate of the West Point Military Academy in New York State and had served in both World Wars. In the 1939-45 conflict he fought in both the Battle of Normandy and the Battle of the Bulge. But when he took control of the 8th Army in Korea at the end of 1950, they were in retreat and disheartened. His first priority was to rally morale. He devised Operation Killer, Operation Ripper then later Operation Courageous and Operation Tomahawk to repel communist forces and maximise the number of enemy fatalities in Korea.

The operations worked from a territorial perspective, but the number of enemy deaths was lower than he intended. When President Truman recalled the Commander of UN Forces in Korea, General MacArthur, in April 1951, Ridgway took his place. He went on to replace Dwight Eisenhower as Supreme Allied Commander in Europe the following year and then became Chief of Staff of the United States Army in 1953.



■ Lt General Matthew Ridgway oversaw stunning victories in Korea just months after taking control of the 8th Army



■ Chinese communists taken as prisoners of war near Seoul during Operation Ripper. Neither that strike nor Operation Ripper resulted in the number of enemy fatalities leaders wanted

Operation Ripper began with the largest artillery bombardment of the Korean War. And resistance from the Chinese and North Korean forces was light as they spirited themselves away north of their defensive points.

But it wasn't easy. In order to save as many soldiers as possible, communist forces did put up a ferocious fight from some points to allow more troops in an adjacent area to flee.

One of the objectives was to retake a communist-controlled 3,000-foot mountain, Oum-san, in Gangwon Province.

On the third day of Operation Ripper, the 1st Marine Division found itself pinned back, and a young Texan sergeant, John Chinner, single-handedly ran through enemy fire to attack a communist-held position armed with just a revolver and hand-grenades. That brave gamble earned a Chinese retreat and a Navy Cross for Sgt Chinner.

And the advance would need more bravery from outstanding men, like Master Sergeant George H Butler. His unit was in a relatively safe position when he noticed that a leading assault platoon was pinned down by intense mortar and automatic weapons fire. He voluntarily charged along a narrow ridge through enemy fire, encouraging his men to follow him. He was wounded in the face and blinded in one eye by fragments of a grenade that exploded near his head. His Navy Cross Citation said his rifle was shot from his hands. Seizing another weapon, he continued advancing, killing ten enemies. Soon after, the Chinese fled. It was only then that M Sgt Butler allowed his appalling injuries to be treated.

But the Communist forces would not buckle, and began a counter attack.

Sergeant Jack Larson would be another Navy Cross awardee. In his memoirs he wrote that he and the rest of Dog Company, which was a supporting unit for a forward battalion which was behind in its advance, were moving up a hill when they received sniper fire.

They saw a pill box above them from which communist snipers were firing. The marines at the front could not advance because they were out of grenades. Sgt Larson collected as many grenades as he could and ran through enemy fire across a ridge to distribute them to the lead battalion. These grenades allowed them to stun the enemy and gain control of the bunker.

As night fell, Sgt Jack Larson was at a listening post, his helmet off to enable him to carry out his task. As he looked around a boulder he saw grenades heading his way. One exploded by his face, shrapnel slicing his skin.

But he realised he needed to secure the position for the evening. Sgt Larson climbed up nearby rocks and single-handedly prevented enemy troops from entering the sector. He was evacuated the next morning, the position held, the advance continuing.

Three days later, the UN forces would reach their first main territorial objective, what they called Phase Line Albany. The following day, the Republic of Korea Army found that the Chinese and Korean People's Army had abandoned the devastated Seoul.

As UN forces re-entered the broken city, they found once-proud buildings reduced to rubble, dead power lines hanging down and a ruined

THE TREACHEROUS TRAILBLAZE

Texan John Chinner was serving as leader of a machine gun section when he took a treacherous gamble to gain a communist fighting position

Sgt Chinner's platoon was assigned the mission of seizing a strategic hill position on 9 March 1951, in the early days of Operation Ripper. He volunteered to scout the terrain by himself, through heavy fire and grenade attacks. Sgt Chinner then had to show himself to the enemy to be able to use hand commands to direct his watching squad to the best direction of approach. But the enemy was protected in two secure bunkers. There they were able to fire automatic rounds and launch grenades at the advancing American troops.

With his squad pinned back, with enemy fire coming at him, and armed with just with his revolver and grenades, Sgt Chinner climbed a 20 ft sheer face under the enemy positions. Using the grenades and his handgun he took the bunker, killing four of the communist soldiers. This allowed his platoon to advance. Continuing his one-man lead, he outflanked a further three enemy bunkers, killed five more enemy soldiers with his revolver and some grenades he had found, and forced the communist troops to abandon their positions. Sgt John Chinner survived this remarkable, treacherous, trailblazing attack and was awarded the Navy Cross for his efforts.



■ A Navy Cross, the US military's second-highest medal of honour, was awarded to Sgt Chinner

population starving. So far, American estimates suggested, 6,500 communist servicemen had been killed in action compared with 158 Allied troops dead and nearly 1,000 injured.

But Ripper was not finished. After Phase Line Albany, Operation Ripper's next territorial ambition was Line Buffalo to the east of Seoul.

'We cannot fight any longer' was the uplifting message American intelligence analysts heard on a communist radio intercept at 12:30 on 15 March. It was exactly what they and their commanders wanted to hear.

UN and ROK forces walked into the city of Hongcheon without a fight. Ripper was gaining territory, but it was failing in sating its mastermind's desire for enemy blood.

Advancing quickly was a problem. Korea had appalling roads. Trucks found it impossible to transport supplies and equipment to forward positions.

Sometimes they used streambeds as a quicker option than the roads. The most efficient method was to rely on help from Korean country folk, who used their ancient A-frame carrying rack to deliver fuel, food and ammunition up steep slopes to keep the advance going.

Although Hongcheon had been easy to sweep into, the land north of it was proving dangerous. Three days of stiff fighting was required to force Chinese and North Korean units into withdrawal. How to stop the communist fall-back? How to achieve Ripper's goal of enemy bloodshed? General Ridgway decided on a colossal parachute drop to intercept the enemy withdrawal.

On 21 March, what would be the final airborne drop of the Korean War was executed – codenamed Operation Tomahawk. 3,500 men

were dropped behind enemy lines at Munsan-ni, near the Imjin River, 20 miles northwest of Seoul and near the 38th parallel. But the communist troops had melted away to safety.

The British General Sir Richard Gale reported to London: "The enemy has conducted his withdrawal methodically and with no little military skill. He knows how to make best use of the terrain."

The ROK and UN forces advanced, finally crossing the 38th parallel on 27 March.

It had been an extraordinary push. The combined ROK and UN forces had been hindered by appalling conditions and some spirited fighting by the Chinese and North Koreans.

But there were individual moments of sheer bravery and a collective plan devised by General Ridgway that was clear, coherent and achieved quicker than even he could have foreseen.

Seoul, a city so close to the 38th parallel, was vulnerable. A spring push by the Chinese People's Volunteer Army saw them advance through many of Ridgway's gains, stopping just five miles north of the capital in April 1951. But the attack was halted. The communists would never control Seoul again.



■ Seoul soon after Operation Ripper. The city's population was devastated during the war, reduced from 1.5 million before the conflict to less than 200,000 during, though it soon recovered

"CONDITIONS WERE FREEZING. SOLDIERS FOUND THEMSELVES KNEE-DEEP IN SNOW AND THE TERRAIN WAS MOUNTAINOUS, TREACHEROUS, WOODED HILLS, RUSHING STREAMS, ROADS BARELY MORE THAN TRACKS"

■ A parachute drop in Korea, 1951. The final drop would be to cut off retreating communist forces at Munsan-ni, but they had melted away



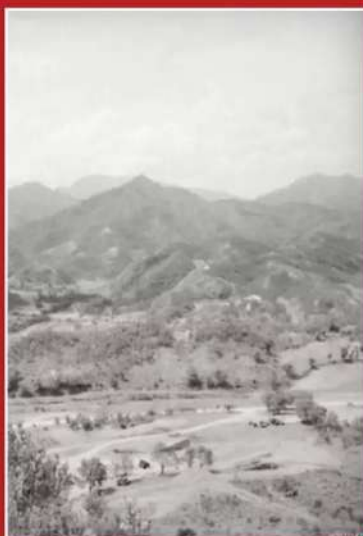
■ Kapyong was one of two major battles fought during the Chinese Spring Offensive and led its eventual collapse a few months later

THE CHINESE SPRING OFFENSIVE

How the Fifth Offensive was China's last-ditch attempt to launch a full-scale assault on the South Korean capital

The Chinese Spring Offensive was the fifth in a series of monumental operations designed to drive United Nations forces out of the Korean Peninsula and allow North Korea and China to establish control of the entire country. The offensive utilised over 700,000 troops split across three main armies, with around 337,000 of these directed straight towards Seoul. Following the failure of the previous offensive in the winter of 1950/1951, the operation commenced at the start of the summer and led to two of the biggest battles in the entire war.

Neither of those two confrontations – the Battle of Imjin River and the Battle of Kapyong – led to outright wins for the PVA, with the former ending in a bloody and costly stalemate that would serve as a revealing microcosm of the rest of the war. China's inability to reclaim Seoul saw the Chinese Spring Offensive largely collapse by the end of the summer, with both sides now consolidating their existing positions for the remainder of the war. Having been pushed beyond the 38th parallel, the Korean War had descended into a conflict of attrition and patrol skirmishes.



■ Kapyong was one of two major battles fought during the Chinese Spring Offensive and led to its eventual collapse a few months later



OUTNUMBERED AND OUTGUNNED

HOW A SMALL FORCE OF AUSTRALIAN, CANADIAN AND KIWI SOLDIERS CHECKED ONE OF THE BIGGEST ONSLAUGHTS OF THE KOREAN WAR

WORDS DOM RESEIGH-LINCOLN

KAPYONG, SOUTH KOREA 22-25 APRIL 1951

When the United Nations came to the aid of South Korea in 1950, it brought with it a wealth of units and battalions from across the world. While soldiers, artillery, armour and aircraft from the United States and Britain formed the bulk of the military presence sent to assist the Republic of Korea (despite both being heavily exhausted from the Second World War), nations such as Canada, Australia and New Zealand also contributed. And it would be on the banks of the Kapyong River in the south of the peninsula that these Commonwealth troops would face one of their greatest challenges.

By 1951, the Korean War had already devolved into the state it would remain in for the rest of the three-year active conflict: a slow battle for small amounts of territory while peace talks progressed at a glacial pace. With the support of the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China, the Korean People's Army of North Korea had invaded the south and was making a strong bid to retake the South Korean capital of Seoul. By April 1951, the PVA had commenced its Spring Offensive, and the road to Seoul would lead directly along the Kapyong River.

In the months leading up to the battle, the United Nations counter-offensive to halt the KPA and PVA march had been, for the most, largely successful. Seoul was still very much the target for the communists – due to its strategic positioning in the south – with its loss to the UN during Operation Ripper in mid-March still fresh in their minds. The UN plan to

push the communist alliance north was in full swing, despite a clash of leadership between US president Harry S Truman and General Douglas MacArthur (which saw him replaced by General Matthew B Ridgway), with Operation Courageous and Operation Rugged forcing China and North Korea closer and closer to the 38th parallel.

BATTLE HARDENED

For the 27th British Commonwealth Brigade, the war had been largely successful, despite significant losses. Its involvement in a number of key battles – including the Battle of Maehwa-San in March 1951 – had introduced it to the single-minded tactics of the PVA and its considerable numbers. Every battle saw the UN greatly outnumbered by the communist foe, and the one to come would be no exception. By April of that year, the 27th now consisted of four battalions – two British, one Australian and one Canadian – and included the 3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (3 RAR), which had proved itself in the bloody defence of Pakchon some months earlier. The 27th also had use of the 16th Field Regiment, Royal New Zealand Artillery (16 RNZA) with its 3.45-inch (88 mm) 25 pounder field guns.

Forming part of the wider US XI Corps, the 27th had enjoyed a brief respite in the wake of Maehwa-San as a reserve, and it followed the US 24th Division as it marched north towards the Benton Line and towards the 38th parallel. The communists had withdrawn just north of the dividing line between north and south, and

“THE WITHDRAWAL WAS A LURE DESIGNED TO COAX THE UNITED NATIONS INTO A REGION WHERE THEY WOULD BE VULNERABLE. ONLY THEN WOULD THE ENEMY REVEAL THEIR TRUE INTENTIONS”

the UN read this as a result of continued losses in the region. However, the collective forces of the PVA and the KPA were not running in shame or fear. They were regrouping. The withdrawal was a lure designed to coax the UN into a region where it would be more vulnerable. Only then would they reveal their true intentions.

On 22 April 1951, that attack was unleashed. The South Korean 6th Division, which had pushed ahead to the Utah Line (just south of the 38th parallel) on the northern end of the Kapyong Valley. Bolstered by the New Zealand artillery, the ROK were now occupying a series of hills. However, this positioning left their armour exposed, and this is when the Chinese struck. At 17:00, two divisions rushed the ROK forces, easily using the gaps in their formations to break them apart. The ROK defences were obliterated and the PVA overwhelmed them. Supplies, munitions and armour were abandoned and the New Zealand gunners were removed to safety. By dusk, the area had been completely lost. The ROK had effectively cut and run, and the PVA took full advantage.

CANADIAN FIREPOWER

By the next day, the 27th were ordered to oversee the South Korean withdrawal from the area, their forces in the area ultimately depleted and their positioning in Kapyong largely lost. They were ordered to defend the northern section of the Kapyong Valley and halt any potential advances from the Chinese. By 23 April, the 27th had been reduced to just three battalions (as well as the artillery guns), but the need to protect the hills that led directly into the valley was paramount. The 2nd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry (2 PPCLI) were assigned to the west embankment (designated Hill 667), while 3 RAR were assigned to defend the one on the east (Hill 504). Both had a clear view of the valley ahead, from which the PVA were likely to attack.

With the 27th Brigade unit, 1st Battalion, the Middlesex Regiment, waiting in reserve – and the 16th Field Regiment, Royal New Zealand Artillery, and Company A of the 72nd US Tank Battalion also in place to provide artillery support – the remnants of the 27th Regiment awaited the red tide surging towards them. The Canadians possessed greater firepower – including six Vickers medium machine-guns – but the Australians were more battle-hardened and were famed for their cast-iron courage. At around 20:00, a surge of South Korean soldiers appeared in full retreat, rushing past the Australian position. It was then that 3 RAR spied the pursuing Chinese force. The true battle was about to begin.

The battle raged throughout the night as an army of 10,000 PVA infantry assaulted the two forward positions of the 27th. Due to their positioning, 3 RAR were taking the brunt of the attack, but were holding their own. Machine gun, mortars and grenades were exchanged on both sides as the Chinese edged ever close thanks to their sheer numbers. The PVA was also launching an attack on the US armour placed to the east of 3 RAR, while continuing to focus fire on the Australian position. Rather than funnelling their forces up the valley, the PVA were attacking relentlessly

SURVIVING AGAINST OVERWHELMING ODDS

Despite facing a vast and imposing army, the relatively small Australian and Canadians battalions remained largely intact

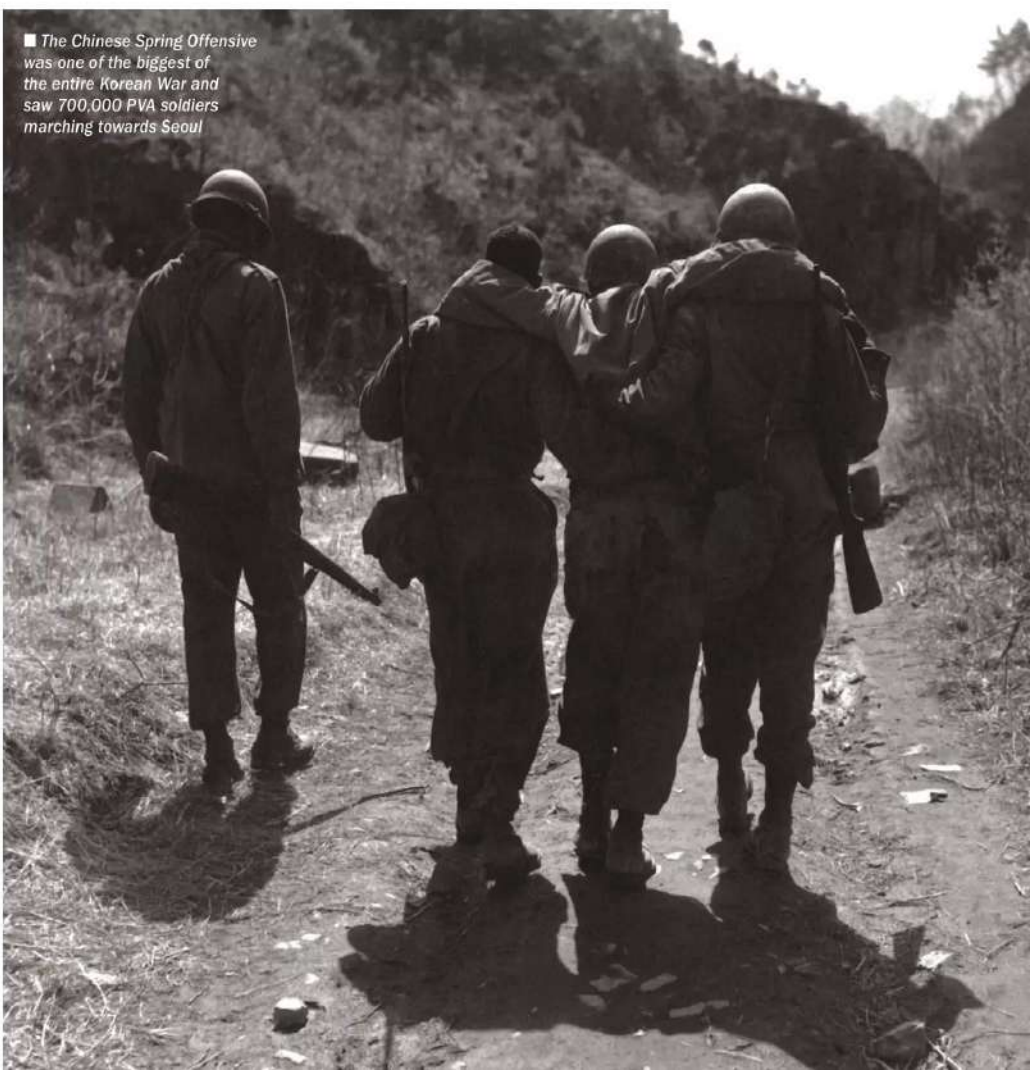
The aftermath of the Battle of Kapyong revealed a battlefield littered with the countless dead of the PVA. The sheer number of bodies was a testament to the coordination and marksmanship of the combined UN forces holding the northern end of the valley – over 1,000 Chinese infantrymen were believed to have perished during the course of the three-day encounter, and far more than that were wounded alongside them. But it was still a haunting reminder that China was willing to sacrifice an ocean of blood in the name of victory for its North Korean allies.

By comparison, losses on the side of the UN were surprisingly light. The Australians of 3 RAR took the worse of the Chinese assault, and suffered the worst casualties with 32 dead, 59 wounded and a further three captured. The Canadians of 2 PPCLI endured 10 dead and 23 wounded. The Americans lost three men, with 12 wounded and two tanks destroyed. Two of the men of the New Zealand artillery battalion lost their lives at Kapyong. It represented the superior tactics of the UN's combined forces and the unbridled courage that saw such a small force repel one of the biggest offensives in the entire Korean War.



■ The draw at Imjin River forced China to redirect its attention towards Seoul and Kapyong, which led to the eventual collapse of the nation's push for a quick victory

■ The Chinese Spring Offensive was one of the biggest of the entire Korean War and saw 700,000 PVA soldiers marching towards Seoul



from multiple angles, probing for weaknesses in the defences. The initial line of defences were broken and recaptured multiple times as the PVA continued to throw bodies at the two Commonwealth nations with a relentless fervour. By the early hours, the ground around Kapyong was pockmarked with munitions fire and littered with the bodies of the dead.

WITHDRAWAL AND ADVANCE

On the afternoon of 24 April, the PVA was attempting to encircle the Australian position by assaulting it from multiple sides. Despite raining fire on the oncoming horde with their Bren and Owens machine guns, the communists were gaining ground. In order, to alleviate the pressure on 3 RAR, the Canadians shifted fire across the embankments, pushing their 700-strong contingent to provide the Australians enough time to withdraw and resupply. The New Zealand artillery guns were also doing their best to support both forward companies. By this point, a force of 6,000 PVA infantry were assaulting the Australian and Canadian defences, which were held by a defence force of less than 1,000.

The defence of Hill 677 was further bolstered by the arrival of American and British battalions, positioned to the east of the hill, which divided the Chinese onslaught. However, by 22:00, the Canadian positions had been overrun and 2 PPCLI was forced to withdraw a short distance. However, the Canadians were incredibly skilled and accurate with their mortar rounds and, in conjunction with the artillery fire of the New Zealand guns, they bombarded the

invading PVA soldiers. Exposed, the Chinese were butchered and were eventually driven back off the hill as the Americans arrived.

On the night of 24 April, the PVA also manoeuvred a portion of their forces and attacked the Canadian Battalion HQ further into the valley. The surprise caught the commanders off guard, but the attack was eventually repelled thanks to the tactical positioning of machine gun emplacements around the perimeter. It was, however, a close call, and proof that China was willing to try any tactic to take Kapyong and eventually resecure the South Korean capital. A lack of reconnaissance on the part of the PVA meant the Chinese were unaware of how well-defended the HQ was, while the low hills meant their attack was largely exposed to the relentless machine gun and mortar fire that was launched in response.

The Canadians could have pulled out due to the multiple attack fronts, but remained because of the lynchpin they were providing for the Australians at the front of the assault. And as morning dawned on 25 April, the US 5th Cavalry Regiment arrived and drove the Chinese from Hill 504, forcing the remaining PVA regiments to withdraw from the battlefield. After three days of bloody fighting, the Kapyong defence had mostly held, and the PVA's attempt to bludgeon its way to Seoul was halted.



■ The Battle of Kapyong remains one of the unsung military encounters of Canadian history, and is marked by a memorial to Canada's fallen

“THE INITIAL LINE OF DEFENCES WAS BROKEN AND RECAPTURED MULTIPLE TIMES AS THE PVA CONTINUED TO THROW BODIES AT THE TWO COMMONWEALTH NATIONS”

■ Artillery fire played a key role in the Battle of Kapyong, much as it did in the UN attempts to hold the Chinese Spring Offensive as a whole



DAY IN THE LIFE OF A MASH DOCTOR

SAVING SOLDIERS' LIVES ON THE FRONT LINE KOREA, 1950-53

During World War II, soldiers who had been wounded in battle had to be evacuated to fixed field hospitals to receive treatment, but these were often so far away from the front lines that the patient would die en route. By the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, the need for mobile medical aid was evident, and so the US Army established the first Mobile Army Surgical Hospital (MASH). These units could be set up close to the front line relatively quickly and crucially, they could move with it, ensuring soldiers urgently received the medical care they needed to greatly increase their chances of survival. MASH units continued to be used throughout several conflicts, including the Vietnam War, until being decommissioned in 2006.

SET UP

After travelling through the night over tough mountain terrain in hostile territory, trucks loaded with tents, medical supplies and medical personnel would offload their cargo in a suitable setting between six and 16 kilometres from the front line. Here the tents were pitched, and up to 200 hospital beds were set up inside. The entire process took no more than four hours.

RECEIVE PATIENTS

Wounded soldiers were initially taken to battle aid stations, small medical units with limited capabilities located on the front line. At these stations they would receive basic emergency care from general medical officers, before either being returned to duty or evacuated by helicopter to the nearest MASH unit for further treatment. Some units received as many as 1,000 casualties a day.

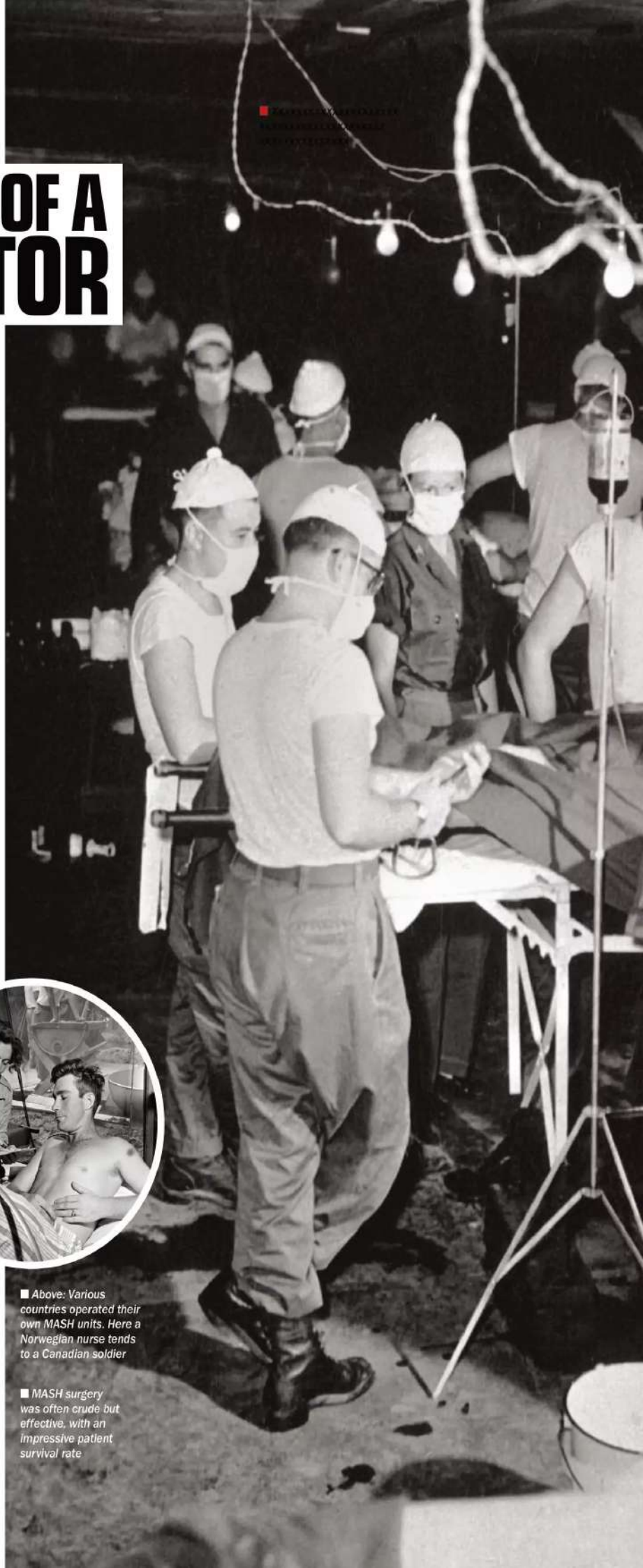
PRIORITISE TREATMENT

Doctors and nurses at the MASH unit would assess each new patient using the triage system, determining the priority of treatment based on the severity of their condition. The adopted principle was: "Life takes precedence over limb, function over anatomical defects" – saving lives was more important than conducting complex surgery to repair an injured limb. Due to the sheer number of patients, the seriously injured were sometimes left to die so that others could be saved.



■ Above: Various countries operated their own MASH units. Here a Norwegian nurse tends to a Canadian soldier

■ MASH surgery was often crude but effective, with an impressive patient survival rate





PRE-OP CARE

MASH units were equipped with laboratories and X-ray machines to help with patient diagnosis, but unfortunately they did not have heating or air conditioning. The extremes of temperature experienced near the front lines meant that the staff and patients had to deal with freezing and sweltering conditions, which often made operations difficult and hindered patient recovery times.

SURGERY

Each MASH unit typically had five operating tables – often just stretchers balanced on trestle tables – and was staffed by ten doctors, ten nurses and a few dozen enlisted men. The doctors were usually drafted as residents or interns, and given only three days of formal army medical training before having to perform their first surgery. Most of their training was on the job.

FREE TIME

Although some days were non-stop, with staff working 12-hour shifts to get through the backlog of patients, others were relatively quiet. During their downtime, the doctors and nurses could retreat to their living quarters to rest, read, socialise and even dance. Sometimes more senior doctors took this time to train others in new procedures and treatments.

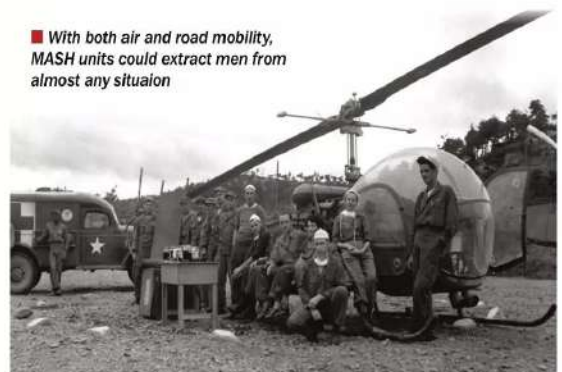
EVACUATION

95 per cent of the patients treated by MASH units left the field hospital alive. As soon as their condition was stable, they would be returned to duty or evacuated to a permanent hospital for further treatment. Each MASH unit was assigned four helicopters for transporting patients to and from the tents, as well as delivering medical supplies and blood for transfusions.

BUG OUT

As the front line shifted, so did the MASH units. When the order to 'bug out' came, the remaining patients were evacuated, the tents were taken down, the supplies were packed up and everything was loaded onto the trucks, all within six hours. Some hospitals moved once a week on average, while others were able to stay put for around a month at a time.

■ With both air and road mobility, MASH units could extract men from almost any situation



Images: Alamy





IMJIN RIVER

IN 1951, A BRIGADE OF UNITED NATIONS SOLDIERS FOUGHT A DESPERATE BATTLE AGAINST OVERWHELMING ODDS THAT ULTIMATELY HELPED SECURE THE FREEDOM OF SOUTH KOREA – AMONG THEM WAS LANCE BOMBARDIER TOMMY CLOUGH

WORDS TOM GARNER

IMJIN RIVER, KOREA 22-25 APRIL 1951

It is April 1951, and a British artilleryman sits on a hill, patiently waiting for battle to begin. His officer hands him a pair of binoculars, points to a spot on a map and says, "Look over there." The soldier peers through the lenses and spots a small gap between two hills. He can't believe what he is seeing – thousands of soldiers, like a mass of ants, advancing across the landscape. Seeing his subordinate gasp, the officer asks, "What do you see?"

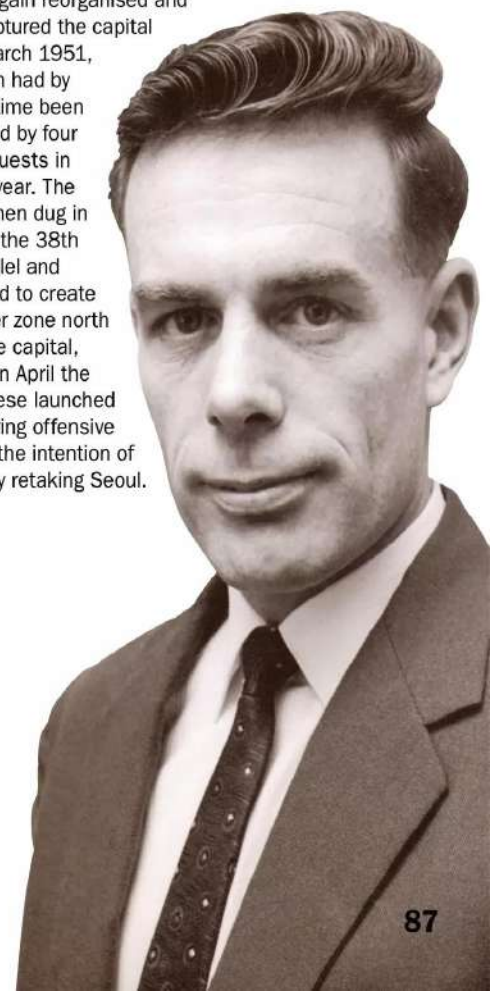
"I don't really know what I'm looking at."
"That's the enemy."

The soldier in question was Lance-Bombardier Tommy Clough, and in 1951 he was only 19 years old, but already an experienced regular soldier in the British Army. What he had seen was a huge Chinese army raining down on his outnumbered position. The following clash would become known as the Battle of Imjin River, a brutal fight that would help to determine the course of one of the most wrongfully forgotten conflicts in modern history: the Korean War.

PREVENTING WORLD WAR

The Korean War was the occasion when the Cold War went 'hot'. In the aftermath of WWII, the USA and Soviet Union were former allies, but they deeply mistrusted each other, particularly with the advent of nuclear weapons. Consequently, they looked to globally control 'spheres of influence', with one of the unstable areas being Korea. This was partitioned along the 38th parallel into the communist North Korea and the US-backed South Korea. War broke out when North Korea invaded the south in June 1950, which then prompted the newly formed United Nations to support the South Koreans. A UN force was sent to the peninsula, and although 88 per cent of it consisted of American troops, there were soldiers from all over the world, including Britain, the Commonwealth and European countries. As US President Harry Truman explained: "In the

simplest terms, what we are doing in Korea is this: we are trying to prevent a third world war." The war dramatically seesawed. Initially the North Koreans captured the South Korean capital of Seoul and almost forced the UN out. In September 1950, the South Koreans and the UN were reinforced and in the following offensive they crossed the 38th parallel, captured Pyongyang and reached the Chinese border. This rapid advance caused the communist Chinese to side with the North Koreans and they attacked in great numbers. The UN was thrown back during a freezing winter and the Chinese captured Seoul. The UN again reorganised and recaptured the capital in March 1951, which had by this time been ruined by four conquests in one year. The UN then dug in near the 38th parallel and aimed to create buffer zone north of the capital, and in April the Chinese launched a spring offensive with the intention of finally retaking Seoul.



DISTANT, BUT BRUTAL

For young soldiers like Tommy Clough, Korea was a baptism of fire. Born in 1931, Clough had joined the British Army aged 14 and trained as a gunner in the Royal Artillery. However, his extreme youth was irrelevant for military life: "As soon as you put on a uniform you were regarded as a man and certainly not as a boy soldier," he recalls. Clough was promoted to lance-bombardier before a distant conflict took over his life: "I had visions of a bright future and suddenly the war started in Korea. We didn't take much notice as it was thousands of miles away. I looked at my mates and said, 'Where the hell is Korea?' We didn't even know where it was on a map." When Clough embarked on a troopship from Southampton he thought he wouldn't be gone long: "We were full of it, going to war and being the heroes, but we'd heard rumours that the war would be over before we got there, but of course that didn't happen. I'd never been further than Southport before! It was a great adventure and we were in a happy mood," he recalled.

After a six-week journey, the mood changed before he disembarked in November 1950: "There was a strange smell coming off the shore and we asked the crew what it was. They said, 'That's Korea.' In those days they used human excreta for manure, which they spread on the paddies so it was a smell we had to get used to." Despite being welcomed by the Koreans on the dockside, Clough soon discovered that Korea did not meet expectations: "When you think of the Far East you think of tropics but Korea is very cold and we had no winter kit at all."

Conditions were so cold that the antifreeze in the British army vehicles froze but Clough was most appalled by the condition of the

Koreans themselves on his way north to the 38th parallel: "What was so pitiful was all the refugees. It was really awful to see because they'd been initially shoved down by the invasion of the North and then when we pushed back they drifted about not knowing what the outcome was going to be. There were atrocities committed by Koreans on both sides. The country was desolate. I saw terrible sights during that time and even the old sweats who had been through Europe or been prisoners of the Japanese thought conditions in Korea were worse than they'd seen anywhere else." The Chinese entry into the war was almost dismissed: "We'd heard rumours that the Chinese were going to be coming in but they were just rumours. We didn't exactly laugh them off but nobody seemed to take them seriously. But then it started when the Americans captured some strange-looking troops who weren't North Korean and then we knew."

THE 'GLOSTERS'

Throughout his Korean service, Clough was in the UN 29th Infantry Brigade as part of 170th Independent Mortar Battery, which was armed with 4.2" mortars, the smallest guns in the Royal Artillery. The battery was split into three 'troops' of 30-32 men, and each was assigned to support an infantry battalion. 29th Brigade comprised of four battalions including the first battalions of the Royal Ulster Rifles, Royal Northumberland Fusiliers,

OPPOSING FORCES

	VS	
UNITED NATIONS 29TH INFANTRY BRIGADE		CHINA 63RD CORPS (19TH ARMY)
LEADER BRIGADIER THOMAS BRODIE		LEADERS GENERAL YANG DEZHI
TROOPS 4,000		TROOPS 27,000

the Gloucestershire Regiment and a Belgian battalion. Clough's mortar troop was assigned to the Gloucestershire Regiment, which was better known as the 'Glosters' and although he was an artilleryman, Clough's troop was an integral part of the battalion: "I was attached to the Glosters the entire time. Mainly, wherever the Glosters went, we went. You became part of them really."

Clough was also proud to be part of a UN force: "It was the first time the United Nations had fought together. It was good for us because we had the backing of the world, if you like. We were sometimes called upon to support the

"THERE WAS A MASSIVE EXPLOSION AND BODIES ROSE UP IN THE AIR IN SLOW MOTION AND THEN BACK ON THE GROUND BEFORE EVERYTHING FELL QUIET. THERE WERE BITS AND PIECES EVERYWHERE"



■ British soldiers, who would go on to fight at Imjin River, embark for Korea, 1950



■ US soldiers made up the majority of the UN forces in Korea and fought side by side with the British troops

Belgians so we all backed each other up." 29th Brigade arrived at the front in early December 1950, and took part in the UN withdrawal as the Chinese crossed the Imjin River but a counteroffensive was launched in February 1951 and the Glosters led a successful assault against Hill 327 (landscape features were numbered by their height in metres). Clough was in the thick of the fighting and was caught up in an incident of friendly fire when a UN shell accidentally landed on the Glosters: "Suddenly somebody shouted, 'Incoming!' and normally everybody throws themselves on the ground but I was loaded with two big batteries on my back. If I had dived on the ground I would have broken my neck so I just lowered myself. The shell landed right in the middle of a 45th Field Artillery observation post. I'd never seen this before or since, it looked like a war film. There was a massive explosion and bodies rose up in the air in slow motion and then back on the ground before everything fell quiet. There were bits and pieces everywhere." The explosion killed a British soldier and Clough still honours his memory: "These things happened all the time. Every time I go back to Korea I go to that man's grave."

"JUST ANOTHER RIVER"

By April, 29th Brigade was back on the Imjin and the battalions were positioned on hilltops south of the river. The front was more suited for a division than a brigade but the positions were meant to be temporary and no wires or mines were laid. Behind the infantry were the tanks of the 8th Hussars and 25-pounder guns belonging to 45th Field Regiment. There was no medium or heavy artillery support and the battalions were too widely dispersed to help each other. Clough and his comrades didn't feel

that they were anywhere special: "At the time it was just another river to us but it formed a kind of barrier. There were big gaps between companies and battalions. To say we were overstretched was an understatement." Clough had also been disconcerted by the quietness on the approach to the river: "We'd been out of touch with the Chinese. Patrols had been sent over two to three miles and we were trying to see where the Chinese were and what their strength was. We didn't see a soul but it turned out that they had been watching us. Then, on 22 April, the brown stuff hit the fan!" The Chinese had indeed been conducting diligent reconnaissance and knew the positions of 29th Brigade and the gaps between its units. At its maximum the brigade numbered 4,000 men, but the large gaps meant that each battalion would have to fight individual battles. This included less than 700 Glosters, but the Chinese offensive involved 300,000 troops across a 64-kilometre front and, in the sector where 29th Brigade were positioned, around 27,000 Chinese troops were about to rain down upon them.

The battle began on the night of 22 April when the Chinese 63rd Corps began to wade across the river. Clough was positioned on a feature called 'Castle Hill' and knew the enemy were coming: "The Chinese were not very good at night discipline and [the other battalions] could hear them chattering away. They sent a flare up and caught the Chinese red-handed in the middle of the river and opened up." Clough was kept busy firing his mortar on night-time positions: "During the night we fired on 'defensive targets' where we fired on targets that the enemy were most likely to be during the day. If you thought they were there you'd send a flare up and bring fire down on them. It was weird at first because when they tried

TOMMY CLOUGH

Born in 1931, Tommy Clough joined the British Army aged 14 at the end of WWII and trained in the Royal Artillery. He was posted to Korea in 1950 and was attached to the Gloucestershire (Glosters) Regiment as part of 170th Independent Mortar Battery. Clough fought to take Hill 327 north of Seoul and then took part in the Battle of Imjin River, where he fought with the Glosters on Hill 235 (now known as Gloster Hill). He was captured and remained a prisoner of war until September 1953, when he was released. Along with the Glosters, Clough was awarded the US Presidential Unit Citation for his actions at Imjin River and was discharged in 1977. Clough did not retire until he was 74 years old and now lives in Gloucester. He returned to South Korea in April 2016 for the 65th anniversary commemorations of the battle.

■ Tommy Clough in South Korea, April 2016



to break through over the river it was fairly sporadic and then of course they came over in very large numbers."

During the first day, Clough first saw the mass of Chinese soldiers through his officer's binoculars and then returned to his mortar position: "One of the gunners, who hadn't been able to see them said, 'Are there many of them?' and I didn't know what the hell to say



because I didn't want to scare him. All I said was, 'Quite a few.' Understatements were the rule of the day! I was shit-scared, I'd never seen anything like it. I thought, 'God we really are in it', especially as I knew the gaps in our position. I remember thinking, 'We're never going to be able to stop them.' I didn't betray my fear back at the mortars, I just got on with it because there was nothing I could do."

The mortars were kept busy: "We were doing our best and we kept firing and firing until the barrels were glowing red-hot, which was very dangerous. The mortar crews held competitions with each other to see how many they could get in the air before the first one exploded. There was no shortage of casualties on the Chinese side, we killed hundreds of them and still they kept coming."

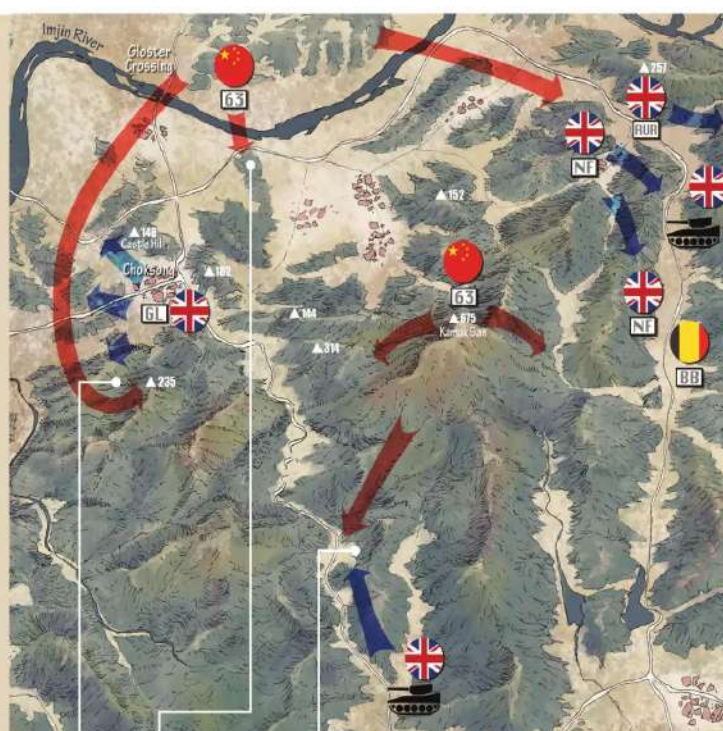
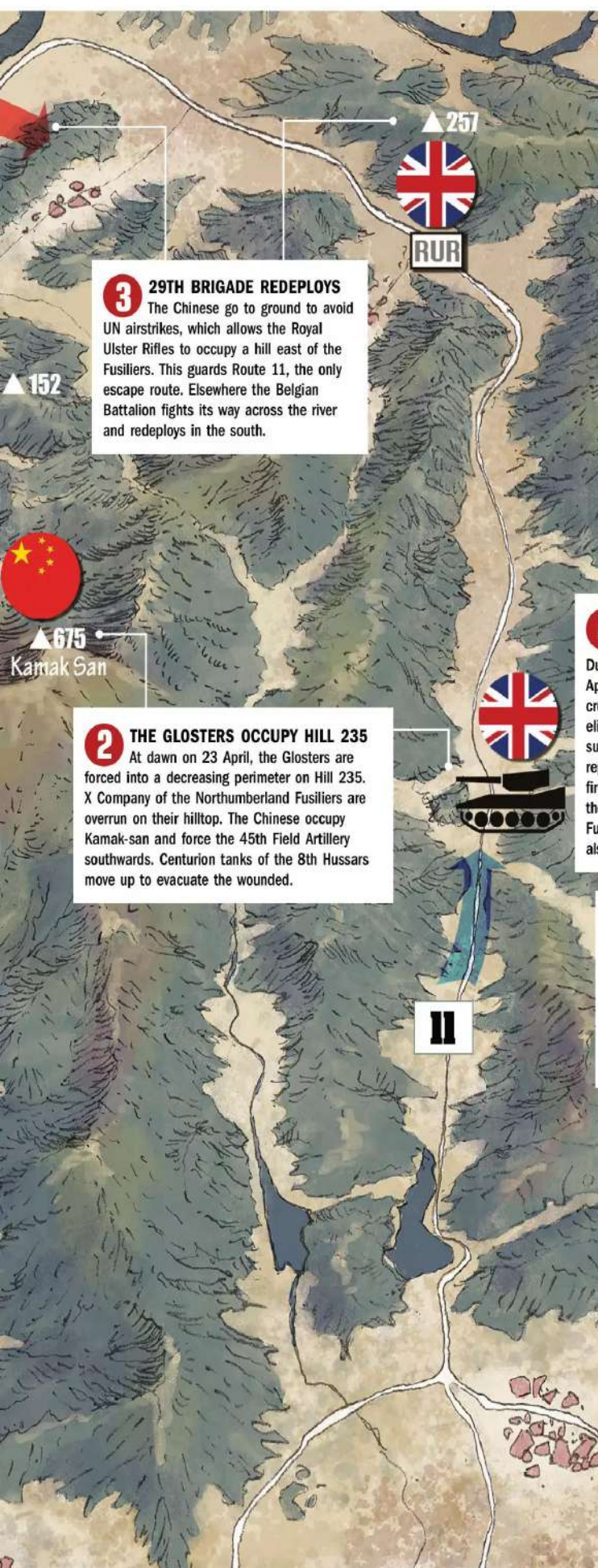
Clough and the Glosters were heavily engaged on the left flank of the UN line, as were the Northumberland Fusiliers to the east. A mountain called Kamak-san, which the British had not occupied and that would soon be controlled by the Chinese, separated the battalions. Although accounts of the battle usually concentrate on the role of the Glosters, Clough is keen to emphasise that other battalions suffered, and fought bravely: "The Northumberlands, Ulsters and Belgians managed to back out of the battle but they lost an enormous amount of men, there was one hell of a battle going on. To our left we had a South Korean battalion who held on as long as they could before they were pushed back. To our right was the rest of the brigade and they were fighting just as hard as we were."

HILL 235

By first light on 23 April, the Glosters were being forced into an ever-diminishing perimeter on Hill 235 in the centre of the battle, while a company of Fusiliers was overrun on its hilltop. Hill 235 became the location for the Glosters' fierce fight against over 10,000 Chinese troops. The hill itself was a forbidding place as it was almost perpendicular on three sides with only the south side having a climbable slope: "We had to carry as much ammunition and water as we could. That hill, 235, still gives me the creeps. However we had to get up and take our mortar barrels with us. These barrels were bloody heavy and they were four foot long and usually drawn on wheels." Despite being cumbersome, Clough wouldn't leave them behind: "The reason we took them was twofold. One was that the Chinese couldn't use them but also in the Royal Artillery our guns are our colours. We don't carry flags, we carry guns. It was a point of honour to take our guns with us." Elsewhere the Chinese occupied Kamak-san, which forced the supporting guns of the 45th Field Artillery to withdraw south. Centurion tanks of the 8th Hussars then moved up to support the infantry and evacuate the wounded. To avoid UN airstrikes, the Chinese briefly went to ground, which enabled the Ulsters to occupy Hill 398 and Route 11, the only escape road for the brigade. The Belgian battalion fought its way from the north side of the river and redeployed in the south.

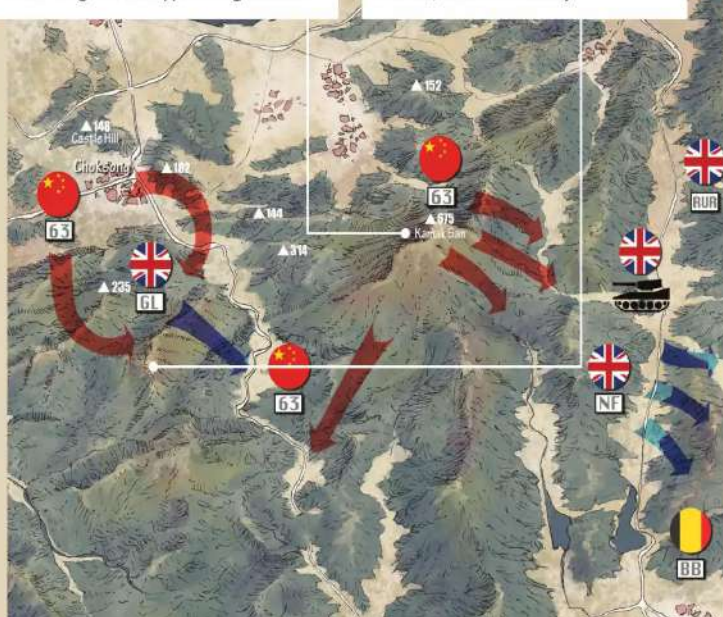
During the night of 23-24 April, the Chinese continued to cross the Imjin and aimed to





7 A SLOW ESCAPE
The brigade withdrawal goes slowly and many of the wounded are loaded onto the back of tanks. The Chinese sweep down along the west of the valley to intercept the UN forces but are unable to prevent them escaping. The armoured rearguard covers the retreat firing into the approaching Chinese.

8 THE GLOSTERS' LAST STAND
The Glosters are the last to withdraw from the battle. On the night of 24-25 April they receive permission to withdraw, but are completely surrounded. After trying to escape down the south slope of Hill 235, most reach safety.





■ After fighting their way out of the encirclement, the Glosters take up a new defensive position



■ Unveiled in London in 2014, the Korean War memorial remembers the men who gave their lives in the conflict

eliminate the Glosters: "We were now stuck on Hill 235 but we weren't there for long because the Chinese obviously wanted to dislodge us. We were a thorn in their side. We had control of the main supply route, which was a road leading south. We didn't know it at the time but where we were was a traditional invasion route from ancient times. The Chinese were using it as the least hilly path to get to Seoul." Consequently, the Glosters were increasingly isolated: "Things were going badly. We were being hard pressed on all four sides. We knew the Chinese were getting behind us and that the Americans couldn't get through to us. The lead Centurion tank sent to help us got knocked out and it blocked the other tanks. We were ordered to hang on for as long we could, which we did. The Glosters fought like trapped tigers for three long days and nights." The battle was turning nightmarish and the situation led to an infamous exchange of allied miscommunication. At brigade headquarters the British Brigadier Thomas Brodie was radioed by his American superiors about the battle's progress. He replied, "It's a bit sticky." The Americans, who misinterpreted British understatement, failed to understand the message as desperate and consequently did not send the appropriate help for 29th Brigade.

Looking back, Clough is more direct but magnanimous: "If had been me I'd have said,

'We're right in the shit!' None of us blamed [Brodie] afterwards, it was just our way of doing things. He obviously hadn't had much experience of Americans because they took it literally. Being, 'a bit sticky' didn't sound too bad." Despite the Americans misjudgment, Clough has fond memories of them: "Typically of the Brits, we scrounged off the Americans who were very generous. If they'd got something they'd give it to you. At the time in Korea, if you had a couple of bottles of whisky you could get a Jeep, no questions asked."

Back on Hill 235, resources were minimal: "Conditions were pretty grim because we had no food but we weren't interested in that. We were mostly interested in water and ammunition. Water is essential and it was running low. The Glosters and us sent a party down to our vehicles, which were parked below. We ransacked them, got what we could and ran back up the hill. We managed to get enough ammunition, which would last about a day. We had a lot of wounded, some of them critical and a lot of dying men."

At this point in the battle Captain Anthony Farrar-Hockley called in a UN airstrike against an opposing hill that was occupied by the Chinese. What Clough witnessed next was an early example of a napalm attack: "I can remember it to this very day and can see it almost. I heard these F-80 jets come in line behind me and before they got to us they dropped their napalm. I thought, 'Oh no, not again,' thinking it was another blue-on-blue situation, but the momentum of the jets carried the bombs over our heads and smack onto the hill where the Chinese were. Although it was brilliant warfare, it was horrendous to smell the napalm and flesh burning and to hear the screams. I felt awfully sorry for the Chinese because it was a terrible weapon."

"DOWN TO THE LAST ROUND"

The airstrike gave the Glosters a few more hours to fight but the end was approaching. Attempts to reinforce them on 24 April failed but the Glosters, Fusiliers and Ulsters fought on and even directed their artillery fire on their own positions. By mid-morning on 25 April the order was given to withdraw. The Fusiliers, Ulsters

and Belgians retreated with difficulty, often with the wounded loaded onto the backs of tanks. Nevertheless, they managed to escape, unlike the Glosters who were completely encircled on the battlefield.

Clough recalled the moment of attempted departure: "The word got around that we were leaving. I remember saying to my mate, 'This'll be something to talk about in the pub!' Although we were surrounded and fighting for our lives we never gave up. I gave a grenade to every sergeant in front of a gun and told them to put them down the barrel in order to scupper the chances of the Chinese using them. As one of our sergeants did it his head exploded, he was hit by a sniper."

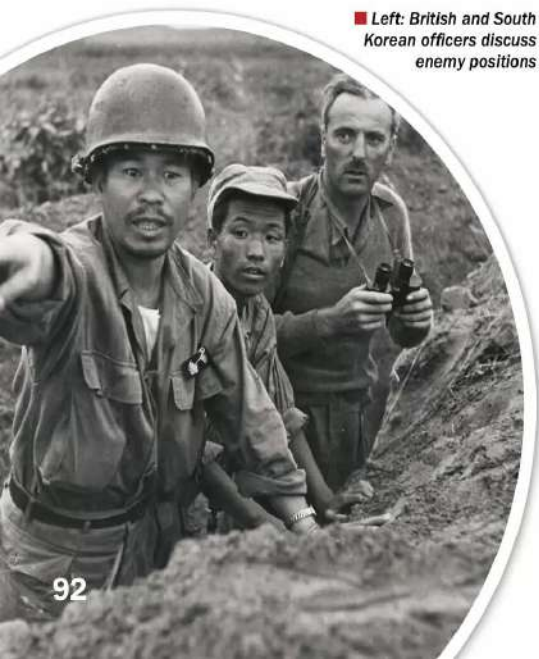
After this grim incident the Glosters were forced to leave their wounded behind and ran down the hill: "The Chinese were picking us off as we went. We carried on down this valley and the troop commander said, 'Spread out!' because if you're grouped together you're a bigger target. I looked up a slope and there were two machine-gunners, with one standing and pointing down at us. I'm not an infantryman but by pure instinct I brought my rifle up, fired one shot and this chap who was pointing at us went down."

The end was near: "I heard a shout from my left, 'Don't shoot!' At this point I realised we weren't fighting our way out. We were almost out of ammunition; most of the infantrymen were literally down to the last round. In the end, we were throwing rocks at them. The Chinese only put up with that because they thought they were grenades but they soon realised the rocks weren't exploding! At that point I stripped my rifle, took the bolt out, tried to smash it against a rock and threw it away. About ten minutes later the Chinese came down and we were prisoners. The first thing they did was strip us of anything they could lay their hands on. I managed to hide my watch, but I won't tell you where!"

"FIGHTING FOR FREEDOM"

Clough would spend the next two years in appalling conditions as a PoW before being released as part of the armistice that ended the conflict in 1953. Imjin River had been

■ Left: British and South Korean officers discuss enemy positions



hugely costly for all concerned. 29th Brigade lost a quarter of its strength, suffering 1,091 casualties, including 622 of the Glosters, most of whom were captured. 59 were killed. Only 40 Glosters escaped the carnage. As part of the wider battle along the front the Americans lost 1,500 and the South Koreans 8,000 but by far the highest casualties incurred were on the Chinese side.

Estimates vary but it's reckoned that Chinese casualties possibly numbered 70,000, with 63rd Corps losing 40 per cent of its men against 29th Brigade. Clough says of the Chinese: "They were a very dangerous foe. They were almost fanatical as if they didn't care whether they were killed or not. We did well to stop them really but we were also convinced that most of the enemy were literally cannon fodder and they just threw them in."

Although it was not immediately obvious, the resistance of 29th Brigade allowed the UN to regroup and block the Chinese advance on Seoul and the offensive turned into a stalemate. The Chinese and North Koreans never retook Seoul, and this highlighted the fact that they could no longer defeat the UN in battle. Peace negotiations began on 10 July 1951 but an armistice was not agreed until 27 July 1953. In the long run the Battle of Imjin River helped to save South Korea from

communist dictatorship, as Clough explains: "At the time you're in a battle and all you see is what's in front of you. Until we came back in 1953, we weren't aware how crucial that battle was. We knew that Seoul was 30 miles behind us and had the Chinese got past us it was fairly open ground. I'm not saying the Chinese couldn't have succeeded but they didn't. They never launched an attack on the same scale for the rest of the war. They lost so many at Imjin, we had slaughtered them."

Today, Clough is part of a dwindling band of British survivors but is proud of what 29th Brigade achieved: "We did our best, that was good to know. That's why the Koreans are so grateful to see us when we come back, kids come up and give us high-fives!"

However the war is sadly largely forgotten in the West, which Clough believes should be redressed: "WWII was exactly what it said, a 'world war'. Korea was a glitch and many thousands of miles away but there were more killed in three years fighting than ten years in Afghanistan and Iraq. That's why I'm willing to talk to anybody because there are only a handful of us left. You will find most of us veterans will open up because we want people to remember it. I know it sounds like an old cliché but we were defending freedom and that's what we were fighting for."



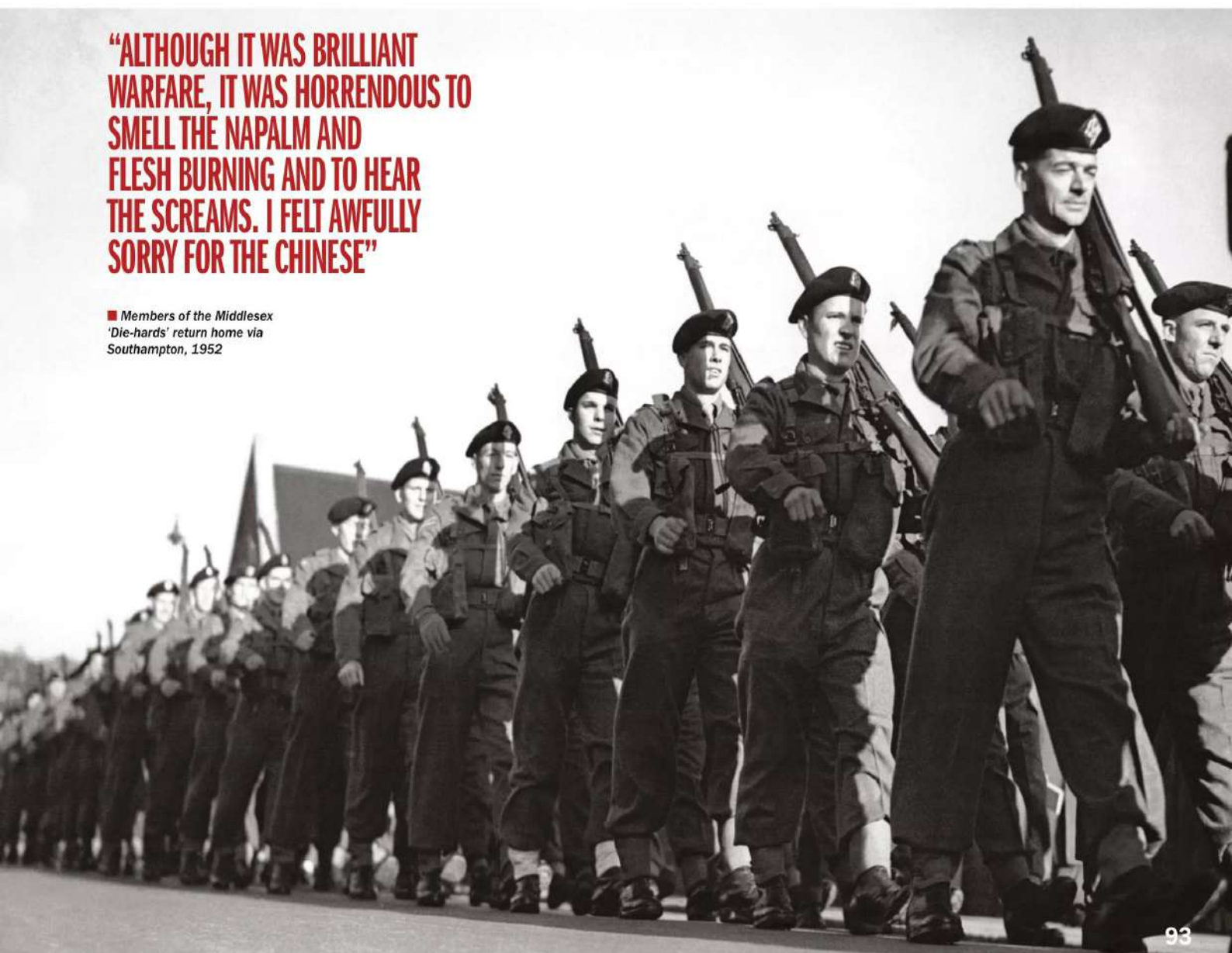
■ Enthusiastic British reinforcements head for Korea to bring depleted units back up to strength

FURTHER READING

- ★ SCORCHED EARTH, BLACK SNOW: BRITAIN AND AUSTRALIA IN THE KOREAN WAR BY ANDREW SALMON
- ★ THE EDGE OF THE SWORD: THE CLASSIC ACCOUNT OF WARFARE & CAPTIVITY IN KOREA BY ANTHONY FARRAR-HOCKLEY
- ★ TO THE LAST ROUND: THE EPIC BRITISH STAND ON THE IMJIN RIVER, KOREA 1951 BY ANDREW SALMON
- ★ CAPTURED AT THE IMJIN RIVER: THE KOREAN WAR MEMOIRS OF A GLOSTER BY DAVID GREEN

"ALTHOUGH IT WAS BRILLIANT WARFARE, IT WAS HORRENDOUS TO SMELL THE NAPALM AND FLESH BURNING AND TO HEAR THE SCREAMS. I FELT AWFULLY SORRY FOR THE CHINESE"

■ Members of the Middlesex 'Die-hards' return home via Southampton, 1952



"COLONEL CARNE TRULY INSPIRED HIS EXHAUSTED MEN TO REPEATEDLY RALLY AND REPULSE THE SEEMINGLY ENDLESS HORDE OF CHINESE COMMUNISTS. CONTINUALLY EXPOSING HIMSELF TO INTENSE HOSTILE FIRE, HE MOVED ABOUT HIS TROOPS, ENCOURAGING THEM TO HOLD FIRM AGAINST OVERWHELMING ODDS" - Official citation for the VC



FOR VALOUR

Heroes of the Victoria Cross

The Victoria Cross (VC) is the highest military honour awarded to service men and women in the Commonwealth. It is awarded for valour in the face of the enemy and can be given to anyone under military command.

WHY DID HE WIN IT?

When his battalion was cut off and surrounded, Carne's calm and confident leadership encouraged the men of the Gloucestershire Regiment to hold their own against a relentless assault comprising 11,000 attackers.

WHEN WAS HE AWARDED THE CROSS?

27 October 1953

WHERE WAS THE BATTLE?

Imjin River, Korea

WHEN DID IT TAKE PLACE?

22-25 April 1951

■ Colonel Carne spent two and a half years in a Chinese POW camp

JAMES POWER CARNE

THE INSPIRING COLONEL WHO RALLIED HIS TROOPS FOR ONE OF THE MOST IMPRESSIVE LAST STANDS IN BRITISH MILITARY HISTORY

WORDS FRANCES WHITE

If there were ever a man who perfectly encapsulated the British stiff upper lip fighting spirit, it was James 'Fred' Power Carne. Described by one of his officers as "one of the most silent individuals I have ever met," Colonel Carne was a quiet, determined man with a will of steel. Born in Falmouth, Cornwall, on 11 April 1906 to George Newby Carne, a brewer and wine merchant, James was educated at the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, and commissioned into the Gloucestershire regiment in 1925. He served as part of the King's African Rifles during World War II and also spent time in Burma. However, it was his actions during the Korean War that would serve as his enduring legacy.

Lieutenant Colonel Carne was relaxing at a cricket match on a lazy Wednesday afternoon in July 1950 when he received the news that would transform his life. The message said that the 29th Brigade was to mobilise for action in Korea; Carne read it slowly and without emotion. The British government had not yet announced that it would be going to war with North Korea, but it came as no surprise to Carne – American troops had already begun to pour into the country and he knew Britain would not be far behind.

Carne may have been prepared for war, but his battalion certainly was not. Despite the conscription, reservists and national servicemen had to be called up to fill the ranks. As Lieutenant Colonel of the 1st Battalion, the Gloucestershire Regiment, Carne was determined to ensure all his men were fighting fit. But this was tricky – the common belief was that the war was nearly won. As the ship carrying the soldiers pulled away from Southampton, the men onboard were jubilant – they expected to be doing a little cleaning up before returning home to victory parades.

In the face of his men's relaxed attitudes, Carne trained and pushed them as if they were going into the heart of the Somme. Despite his 'old-school' attitude and strict tendencies, the men immediately warmed to Carne. Aged 45, constantly smoking his trademark pipe and with a firm but fair approach, he became very popular among the Glosters.

Little did the Glosters know, their trust in their colonel would soon mean the difference between life and death. Rumours of Chinese troops crossing the Manchurian border began to surface and it was quickly confirmed that China had entered the war. The Glosters' involvement in the conflict had only just begun and the victory parades they dreamed of would have to wait. The Chinese made rapid advances through the country and Carne realised his men had a gruelling fight against a formidable foe on their hands.

The Korean capital of Seoul had changed hands four times in a bitter year of fighting, and as 1951 arrived, China prepared to take it back in its Spring Offensive. The UN aimed to create a buffer in front of the city and the 29th Brigade held a vital section of the line. Colonel Carne and his men were placed on the left flank guarding a ford over the Imjin River, while the Belgian Battalion was north of the river. Because of the lack of men, the four battalions of the 29th Brigade were scattered, with huge gaps in their deployment. Coupled with a distressing lack of heavy artillery, the British position was a very vulnerable one, and an attack was on its way.

When night fell on 22 April, the advancing Chinese managed to move around the Belgians and began to make their way across the Imjin River. Determined to stop the advance, Carne encouraged his Glosters to unleash heavy fire upon the Chinese troops; they fired so furiously

"LIEUTENANT-COLONEL CARNE SHOWED POWERS OF LEADERSHIP THAT CAN SELDOM HAVE BEEN SURPASSED IN THE HISTORY OF OUR ARMY. HE INSPIRED HIS OFFICERS AND MEN TO FIGHT BEYOND THE NORMAL LIMITS OF HUMAN ENDURANCE"

Official citation for the VC

that their guns grew scorching hot and began to seize up. As the night went on and stream after stream of Chinese pushed on across the river, it became clear that they had broken through the fractured UN and ROK lines.

By the next morning, Carne and the Glosters, despite fighting furiously, were steadily pushed back by the relentless numbers of Chinese soldiers. As the hours ticked past, wave after wave of Chinese troops attacked with rifles, grenades and machine guns. Carne had no option but to withdraw the Glosters from their position and re-form on a nearby hill, which would later become known as Gloster Hill. As the night drew in, constant enemy reinforcements streamed across the Imjin with one aim – to eliminate the now exposed and surrounded Glosters.

Not only did the Glosters lack any heavy artillery, but half of the men were already dead or wounded, and the remainder were exhausted. Supplies were low, with one company resorting to launching empty beer bottles at the advancing enemy, and attempts to reinforce the troop were abandoned due to the thick and impassable terrain. The Glosters, and Colonel Carne especially, were completely out on their own.

If Carne was under pressure, he didn't show it. He had been calmly smoking his slow-burning pipe through the constant panicked messages of "they're coming again," reassuring his men that all was under control. Although he appeared a vision of composure, he had personally fought back groups of advancing Chinese on two separate occasions, armed with bayonets and grenades. As he returned over the ridge after driving another group of adversaries back, a captain queried what had happened, and he casually replied: "Oh, just shooting away some Chinese."

Carne faced an impossible situation; his battalion was just 300 men strong, including cooks and drivers, facing countless thousands of Chinese, with just enough ammunition to last 12 hours. But, with just a meagre supply of food and water, he and his men were to hold out as their position was pummelled by mortars, machine gun rounds and constant assaults from their enemy.

Carne and his men, encircled on the hill, had no option but to watch the other battalions retreat, and as Carne radioed headquarters, he received the lone instruction: "Hold where you are." The situation was utterly dire and on paper seemed hopeless, but Carne refused to let this show. If the retreating battalions were going to stand any chance of survival, he and the Glosters would have to keep the Chinese occupied with what little resources and energy remained. Carne knew that what was being asked of him was close to a suicide mission,

but if the Glosters' sacrifice could buy valuable time, then so be it.

Carne pushed back all the fear and doubt and appeared to his men the picture of confidence. As the Brigade Commander radioed through and asked how his battalion were coping, he responded that all was well, they could hold on and everyone was in good heart. The colonel moved between the positions of all his men under heavy machine gun fire, smoking his pipe with a cool, calm demeanour and encouraged his troops nonstop through the day and night.

The Chinese were constantly launching assault after assault, but the Glosters drove them back, claiming thousands of lives as they defended their precarious position. As the battle raged on relentlessly through the night, the Glosters steadily lost almost everything – their ammunition, support, and the majority of their lives, but thanks to Carne their morale never wavered. Finally, after one of the longest nights in military history, morning dawned on 25 April with the Glosters fighting strong and still defending their position. Upon discovering this, the brigadier commented: "Only the Glosters could have done it."

The Chinese losses were huge. The Glosters had inflicted a brutal blow to their enemies, who suffered some 10,000 casualties. The Chinese 23rd Army was pulled out of the front line and the armed forces in general would never again attempt a similar frontal assault. However, despite their valiant stand, there was more bad news for the Glosters. The infantry column sent to relieve them to allow their escape was not coming – they would have to fight their way out alone. Carne organised his men, now numbering just 169, into separate companies to break out independently in the hope that at least some of them would make it to the safety of the UN line.

Carne was able to avoid capture for a day but, eventually, he and the majority of the Glosters were marched to a prisoner of war camp. While his men were subjected to 're-education', Carne, as their leader, was singled out for great lengths of time in mind-breaking solitary confinement. The colonel kept himself sane in the appalling and torturous conditions by carving stone crosses, which his battalion used for prayer. He was finally released in September 1953, and on 27 October was awarded the Victoria Cross. Three days later the Gloucestershire Regiment was given permission to wear the Distinguished Service Cross for their valiant and heroic last stand against overwhelming forces during the Battle of Imjin River. Carne, forever unruffled, offered a single comment on his captivity: "I have gained an added pride in being British and have lost a little weight."

1 THE CHINESE ADVANCE

On the north bank of the river, a Chinese patrol advances east towards the bridges across the Imjin. The 29th Brigade is unable to secure the bridges and faces an all-out attack from the numerically superior foe. Several companies are separated and forced to retreat.

2 THE LEFT FLANK

On the left, the Gloucestershire regiment is heavily engaged, and Carne encourages his men to unleash hell upon the Chinese advance. The enemy takes advantage of the fractured battalions and Carne has no option but to move the Glosters back onto Hill 235.

4 DEFIANT STAND

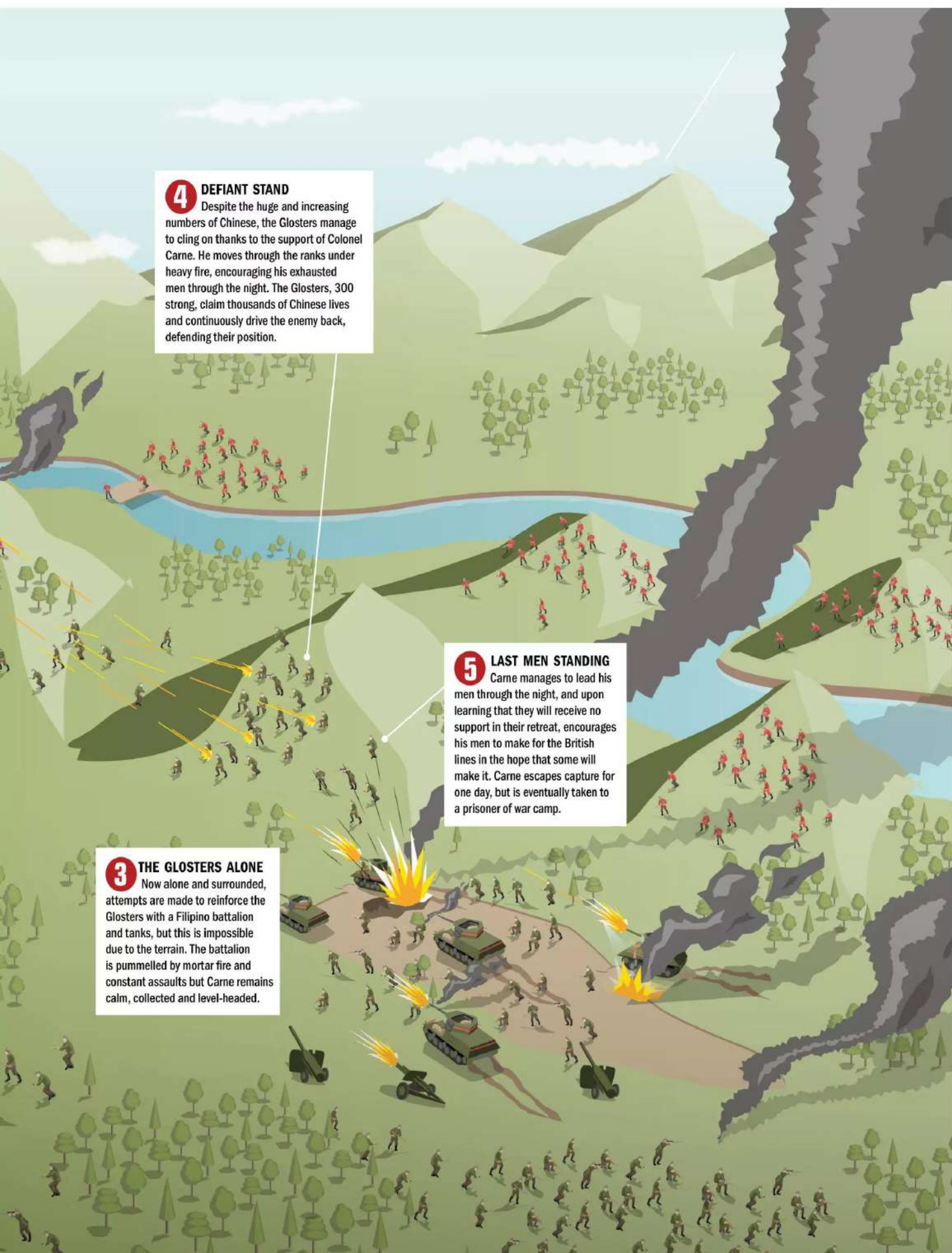
Despite the huge and increasing numbers of Chinese, the Glosters manage to cling on thanks to the support of Colonel Carne. He moves through the ranks under heavy fire, encouraging his exhausted men through the night. The Glosters, 300 strong, claim thousands of Chinese lives and continuously drive the enemy back, defending their position.

5 LAST MEN STANDING

Carne manages to lead his men through the night, and upon learning that they will receive no support in their retreat, encourages his men to make for the British lines in the hope that some will make it. Carne escapes capture for one day, but is eventually taken to a prisoner of war camp.

3 THE GLOSTERS ALONE

Now alone and surrounded, attempts are made to reinforce the Glosters with a Filipino battalion and tanks, but this is impossible due to the terrain. The battalion is pummelled by mortar fire and constant assaults but Carne remains calm, collected and level-headed.



BENJAMIN F WILSON

THIS ONE-MAN ARMY LED THE CHARGE IN AN UPHILL STRUGGLE, SINGLE-HANDEDLY TAKING ON COMMUNIST FORCES IN KOREA TO PROTECT HIS PLATOON

WORDS JACK PARSONS

The Medal of Honor is the highest military honour in the United States, awarded for personal acts of 'conspicuous gallantry' and going beyond the call of duty. The medal was awarded to First Lieutenant Benjamin F Wilson by President Eisenhower himself for the officer's heroic actions in single-handedly taking on enemy forces during the Korean War. Despite serving in two wars, Wilson's military career almost passed entirely without distinction of any kind. He enlisted in the US Army in 1940 aged 18, seeking escape from his sleepy seaside home in Washington. Stationed at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, he had reached the rank of Corporal when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941. There is little known about Wilson's actions on that day, though he once joked that the Japanese bombing woke him up from a rare lie-in.

He was later commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in 1942, after attending the Officer Candidates School. But despite frequently applying for combat service, Wilson's WWII experience passed peacefully, with the Army keeping him stateside in training roles.

Having never seen active duty, when the war was over Wilson resigned his commission and returned home to Vashon Island, Washington. However, working in the lumber mills didn't agree with him, and he was back in uniform within nine months. Even with the looming threat of the USSR in the Cold War, the United States Army was thinning its ranks, and recruitment officers told Wilson they had no need for a lieutenant, even an experienced one. Wilson was more interested in action than rank, so re-enlisted as a private recruit all over again and was sent to Korea.

It was here that Wilson finally got the chance to prove himself in battle. By the summer of 1951, his experience had seen him promoted

to First Sergeant in Company I, 3rd Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, part of the 7th Infantry Division. On 5 June, his company was charged with taking the largest hill overlooking the Hwachon Reservoir. Also known as Limbo's Dam, or Hell's Waiting Room, the dam had proven a focal point for fighting between Allied and Communist forces in recent months.

The hydroelectric dam was not only a strategic asset, because it was a source of power for South Korea, but also because it could be used to flood downstream areas. At midnight on 8 April 1951, Chinese and North Korean forces captured the dam and opened the spillway gates, raising the Han River level by four feet and washing away five floating bridges. These included connections to the United Nations Command – the headquarters of the multinational allies in Korea.

The UN's initial attempts to take back the reservoir were beset by problems. The 7th Cavalry Regiment attacked north towards the dam, but only made it within half a mile before being pushed back by communist forces. As well as the enemy holding the higher ground, the terrain made ground assaults on the reservoir even more challenging for the UN forces. The hilly countryside and poor roads meant that armoured vehicles couldn't make it to the dam, while it was also much harder to transport artillery, so only one battery of 155mm howitzers could range the dam, rather than the three battalions that were assigned. This also made it difficult to deliver boats for amphibious assault on the dam.

Ultimately, the UN troops were only able to stop enemy forces from using the dam as a weapon with the help of air support. On 30 April, AD-4 Skyraiders dropped 2,000-pound bombs on the reservoir, along with rocket fire. However, this still wasn't enough to destroy the 20-foot-tall and 40-foot-wide steel flood gates, which were reinforced with concrete. Eight

■ President Eisenhower shaking hands with Benjamin F Wilson



FOR VALOUR

Hero of the Medal of Honor

The USA's highest military honour is awarded to members of the armed forces for exceptional acts of valour in combat. This is when service personnel have gone beyond the call of duty, often placing themselves in difficult situations beyond reasonable expectation.

WHY DID HE WIN IT?

For showing outstanding bravery in both leading the charge against an enemy force and providing cover fire so that his troops could safely retreat. He even received a life-threatening injury.

WHERE WAS THE BATTLE?

Near Hwach'on-Myon, South Korea

WHEN DID IT TAKE PLACE?

5 June 1951

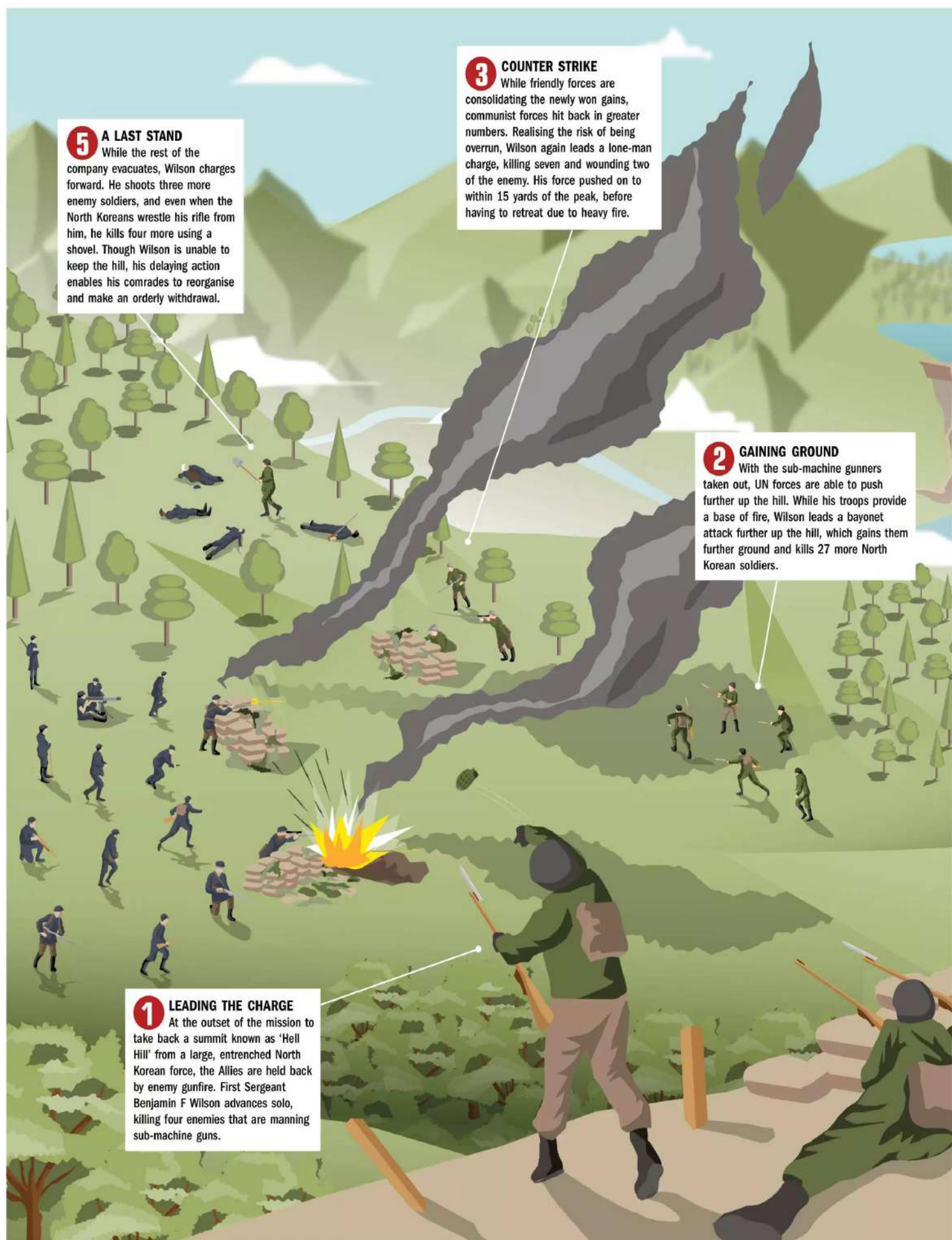
WHEN WAS HE AWARDED THE MEDAL?

7 September 1954

WHAT WAS THE POPULAR REACTION?

While Wilson's exploits were not widely reported in the press, he was honoured with a Distinguished Service Cross and Purple Heart along with his Medal of Honor, and later went on to become a Major.



**5 A LAST STAND**

While the rest of the company evacuates, Wilson charges forward. He shoots three more enemy soldiers, and even when the North Koreans wrestle his rifle from him, he kills four more using a shovel. Though Wilson is unable to keep the hill, his delaying action enables his comrades to reorganise and make an orderly withdrawal.

3 COUNTER STRIKE

While friendly forces are consolidating the newly won gains, communist forces hit back in greater numbers. Realising the risk of being overrun, Wilson again leads a lone-man charge, killing seven and wounding two of the enemy. His force pushed on to within 15 yards of the peak, before having to retreat due to heavy fire.

2 GAINING GROUND

With the sub-machine gunners taken out, UN forces are able to push further up the hill. While his troops provide a base of fire, Wilson leads a bayonet attack further up the hill, which gains them further ground and kills 27 more North Korean soldiers.

1 LEADING THE CHARGE

At the outset of the mission to take back a summit known as 'Hell Hill' from a large, entrenched North Korean force, the Allies are held back by enemy gunfire. First Sergeant Benjamin F Wilson advances solo, killing four enemies that are manning sub-machine guns.

"LIEUTENANT WILSON'S SUSTAINED VALOR AND INTREPID ACTIONS REFLECT UTMOST CREDIT UPON HIMSELF AND UPHOLD THE HONORED TRADITIONS OF THE MILITARY SERVICE"

Official citation for Wilson's Medal of Honor

Skyraiders had to return the next day armed with MK13 air torpedoes – the last time this weapon was ever used in combat – to be able to destroy one sluice gate and damage many of the others.

Though the attack had negated the military value of the dam, the UN still wanted to regain control of it. Wilson's company had been sent to capture the nearby summit, which in the coming days would earn the nickname 'Hell Hill'. Wilson was soon caught in a literal uphill struggle, with his men taking on a much larger enemy force that was ensconced in heavily fortified positions on the peak.

As the North Koreans rained down small arms and automatic weapon fire, preventing UN forces from being able to move forward, Wilson charged ahead, firing his rifle and throwing grenades. The heroic action killed four enemy soldiers manning sub-machine guns, allowing the UN to get a foothold on the hill. With supporting forces providing cover fire, Wilson led a bayonet attack further up the hill, killing 27 more North Koreans.

While the company tried to consolidate its position on the hill, the enemy launched a counterattack. Lieutenant Wilson, having realised the imminent threat of being overrun, made another lone-man charge, killing seven soldiers, wounding two, and routing the remainder in disorder. Wilson's forces were now able push on to within 15 yards of the summit, when enemy fire once again halted the advance. However, this time the enemy fire was far too overpowering, and he ordered the platoon to withdraw. Characteristically, Wilson remained to provide his retreating troops with cover fire, taking a bullet wound to the leg.

With a life-threatening injury, medics tried to evacuate Wilson to a MASH station. They

carried him down the hill on a stretcher as the battle drew to an end. About halfway down the hill, Wilson's stretcher-bearers put him down to rest. Not being one to give in easily, but clearly in pain, Wilson got up from the stretcher and made his way back up the hill in spite of his injuries. However, at this point everyone else was retreating, so he was almost the only US soldier on the offensive.

Already injured and greatly outnumbered, Wilson pushed on against seemingly insurmountable odds. He charged the enemy ranks with his rifle, killing three enemy soldiers. When enemy soldiers physically wrestled the rifle from his hands, he pulled out his standard-issue entrenching shovel and beat four more enemies to death. This delaying action enabled his comrades to make an orderly withdrawal.

While this is the instance that earned Wilson the Medal of Honor, the story doesn't end there. The next day he killed 33 more Chinese soldiers with his rifle, bayonet and hand grenades in another one-man assault. In the process, he reopened the wounds that he'd suffered the day before and was finally evacuated to a hospital. He was again recommended for the Medal of Honor, but US Army policy prohibited any man from being awarded more than one. Wilson received the Distinguished Service Cross instead and was commissioned when he returned to the States. He retired from the Army as a Major in 1960, and died in Hawaii in 1988.

4 RETURN TO THE FRAY

While his troops retreat, Wilson provides covering fire, but takes a bullet to the leg. Medics try to evacuate Wilson to a hospital, however, as soon as they put his stretcher down for a rest, he limps off back up the hill to rejoin the fight.



■ Soldiers from Wilson's 31st Battalion firing field cannon days after Wilson earned his Medal of Honor



LOSING CONTROL OF THE RIDGE

Why the PVA and the KPA eventually lost the tactical advantage of the Taebaek Mountains

From the perspective of the United Nations – with the United States, the Philippines and the Republic of Korea all contributing forces – the Battle of Bloody Ridge was ultimately won by sheer brute force. It was, like so many other battles in the Korean War, an attritional confrontation with both sides inflicting heavy casualties on the other, but it would be the use of air support (something the KPA did not have access to during the battle), artillery and tank fire, and a relentless flanking manoeuvre that saw the communists driven off the ridge.

However, for the armies of North Korea and China, there were far more factors that led to their defeat. Orders from high command were extremely strict – so strict that even if orders led a unit to be almost entirely wiped out, no effort would be made to preserve it. When units were eventually withdrawn from a lost position, this would be done so late in the process that casualties would be catastrophic. The lack of air support also played a huge factor in their loss. Having Soviet jets would have greatly improved their chances, but without them, the napalm runs by the UN cracked the communist defences wide open.

“THE ROK AND THE UN HAD DESIGNATED THE MOUNTAIN RIDGELINE INTO THREE SEPARATE HILLS – HILL 983, HILL 940 AND HILL 773”



■ Artillery fire played a key role in the battle, but due to the large amounts of fog throughout the majority of the action, the equipment was only ever used intermittently



■ Lasting 19 days, the Battle of Bloody Ridge lived up to its name with an estimated 10,700 soldiers having lost their lives on both sides

THE TAKING OF BLOODY RIDGE

HOW A STALEMATE AND POTENTIAL FOR A PEACE TREATY LED TO ONE OF THE KOREAN WAR'S MOST INFAMOUS ENCOUNTERS

WORDS DOM RESEIGH-LINCOLN

YANGGU COUNTY, SOUTH KOREA 18 AUGUST - 5 SEPTEMBER 1951

By the summer of 1951, the Korean War had ground down to a tense stalemate between the Korean People's Army of North Korea and their Chinese allies, and the Republic of Korea of the South, aided by the might of the United Nations. Much of the war had been fought over the strategic placement of certain bridges, ridgelines and supply routes and what came to be known as the Battle of Bloody Ridge would be no different.

Despite delegates from both sides travelling to Kaesong, a city in North Hwanghae Province in the southern part of North Korea, no armistice had been signed, so military action was still taking place on North Korean soil. With China's Second Phase Offensive having pushed most of the KOP and the UN's forces back towards the 38th parallel, South Korea found itself on the brink of its own border, with the might of the communist tide ready and waiting to drive its troops back even further.

The catalyst for the battle was the Taebaek Mountain range, a ridge that ran along the eastern side of the Korean Peninsula. The mountains overlooked the 38th parallel below, providing excellent overwatch on the KOP and UN activities below and, more importantly, serving as a platform that would bring the border with firing range of the People's Volunteer Army (PVA) and the KPA's artillery. If China took the mountain ridge, and was able to point its guns toward the line that divided the two nations, the course of the war would change forever.

MOUNTAIN OFFENSIVE

Over the previous weeks, both sides had clashed over various ridges and points of access a mile north of the border, but with the huge strategic significance the Taebaek Mountains presented, the KOP and the UN realised they couldn't allow the communists

to be so close to the border and a supply road which led directly to South Korea. By this stage, the combined forces of the PVA and the KPA numbered close to 15,000 soldiers and they had set about building a complicated nest of defences along the ridge's many undulating hills, designed to hamper an attacking force with mines and pockets of artillery fire.

A large portion of the ridge looked as if it had been ploughed, with bunkers and trenches built to withstand a certain amount of artillery fire. The ROK and the UN had designated the mountain ridgeline into three separate hills – Hill 983, Hill 940 and Hill 773 – with 983 presenting the highest peak to the west, 940 amid razor-like ridges near the centre and 773 far to the east. With patches of woodland and countless rocky outcrops, it was already a treacherous terrain before the communists began altering it.

So, on 18 August 1951, the ROK decided to make the first move. A push was made to take the ridge and all three hills, and after a week of close-quarter firefights and hand-to-hand battles, the ROK finally drove the communists back. However, it was a short-lived victory, as the Chinese mounted a bloody counter-attack the next day and forced the ROK back down into the mountain range. The push had caused over 1,000 casualties for the South Koreans – with over a quarter of these listed as missing or killed in action. The loss of the ridgeline so soon after its acquisition – and the considerable loss of life – left the ROK reeling.

SLOW ADVANCE

Shortly after, United Nations forces – specifically the US 2nd Infantry Division – led their own counter-attack on the ridge, and what followed was a bloody attrition where both sides exchanged control of the small hills that made up the vast majority of the ridge. On 27 August, the 2nd Infantry Division made a push

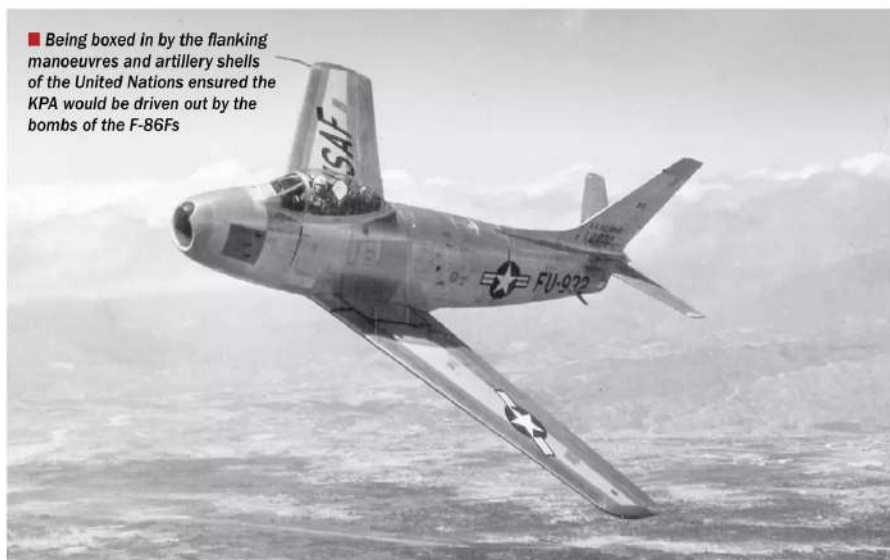
to take Hill 940, as well as another strike on Hill 983, but failed, and the US forces were driven back down the mountain. By this stage the area had also been struck by torrential rain. The downpour turned the mountainside leading back to the 38th parallel into a veritable mudslide, making the logistics of moving supplies to the 9th Regiment nearly impossible. Constant shelling from KPA artillery and a barrage of enemy fire were causing the already depleted 9th Infantry Division to crumble, but they were soon bolstered by the arrival of the 23rd Infantry Regiment.

As the 23rd arrived up top to help weather the storm of KPA and PVA fire, the remaining infantry division – the 38th – positioned itself around the main ridgeline, creating a flanking force that threatened to cut off the communist forces on the ridgeline and potentially remove their only path for retreat. During this time, the United Nations began making use of supporting fire, mainly involving the use of artillery. The 2nd Infantry Division had four separate artillery battalions, two medium-size artillery battalions, two heavy-mortar companies, a single 105mm battalion, two companies of regimental tanks,

and one medium tank company. However, the frontal assault was not going well for the United Nations. The attacking force, consisting mainly of US infantry, were suffering heavy losses, with the North Koreans using their dug-in position and a clever use of mines and camouflage to repel the invaders time and time again. Casualties were disastrously high, with A Company from the 9th having its numbers cut in half by the sheer brutality of the enemy attacks. The worsening weather conditions and the loss of commanders and medics was making the assault an outright catastrophe. So in the early hours of 30 August, artillery fire was used as a smokescreen to enable the 9th to pull back, leaving many of their dead and key supplies behind.

Morale was low, but the fight was far from over. There was no eventuality where the KPA and its PVA counterparts could be allowed to form a permanent artillery placement on the ridge, so on 31 August the 1st battalion from

■ Being boxed in by the flanking manoeuvres and artillery shells of the United Nations ensured the KPA would be driven out by the bombs of the F-86Fs



“THE FOG SEEMINGLY GREW THICKER AS THE DAY WORE ON; THE SOUND OF GUNFIRE, EXPLODING ARTILLERY SHELLS AND THE DISTANT CALL OF VOICES COULD BE HEARD”

■ Aerial shot of Hill 861. Each of the hills was given a numerical designation based on its individual height in metres



the 9th was loaded in a truck that followed the main supply round to the east of the mountains. All along the road, they found the corpses of KPA soldiers. It turned out that amid the losses of the front assault, the 38th had managed to establish a base of operations and were now in a position to move up behind the KPA and flank them. Fog hung thick in the air, hiding the enemy within.

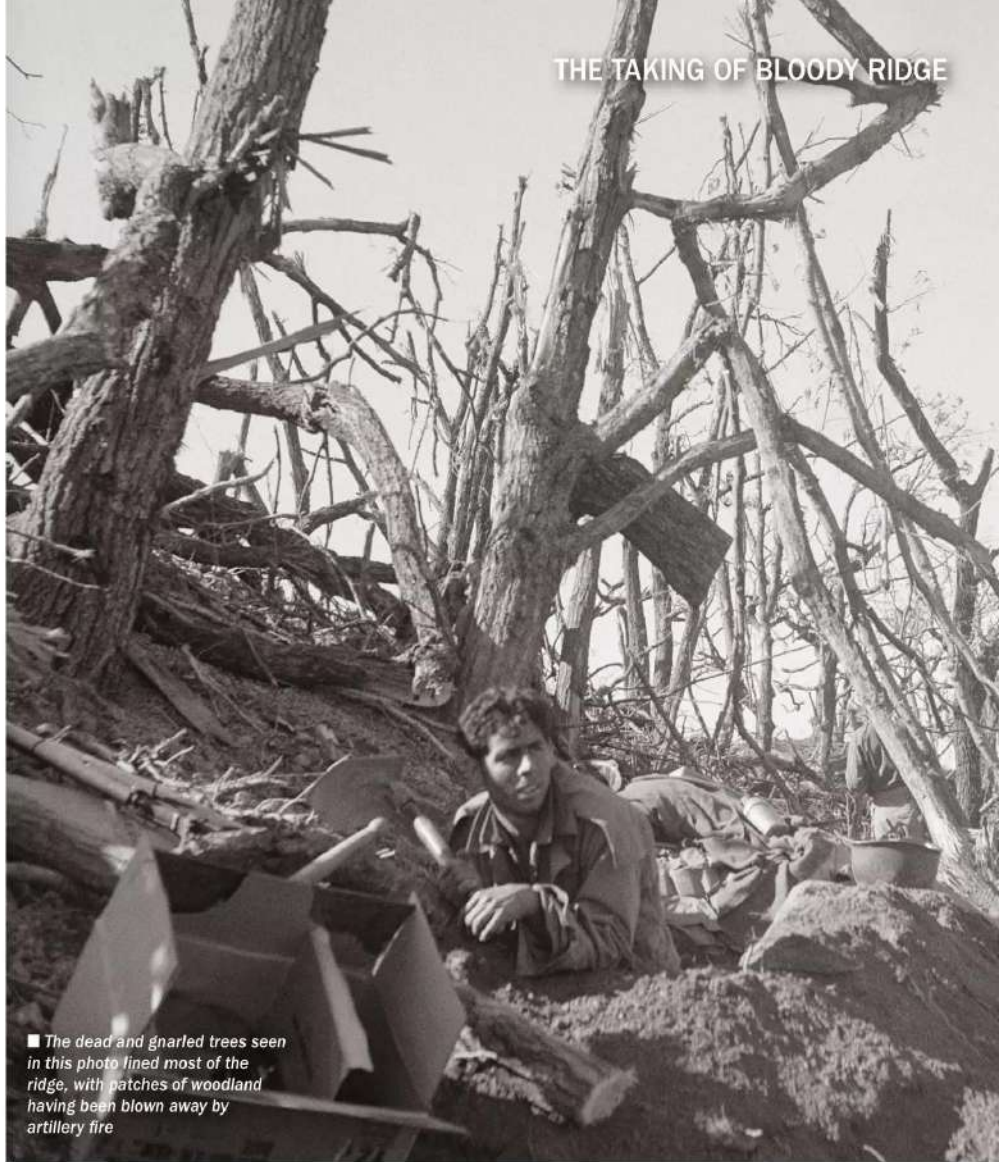
WAR IN THE FOG

With its artillery and tank battalions ordered to bombard all three hills in the brief moments the fog cleared, UN forces began the slow move through the northern pass. The fog seemingly grew thicker, the sound of gunfire, shells exploding and distance voices could be heard. Having replaced their ammunition, bolstered their numbers with reinforcements and had something as simple as a hot cup of coffee, the troops (with C Company in the lead) began scouting ahead. It was clear thanks to the bunker constructions that they would encounter the enemy at any moment.

Suddenly a burst of machine gun fire not far from Hill 773 burst through the gloom and cut into C Company. Taking several casualties, Companies B, D and G were ordered to take point and return fire. The gun emplacement's position made it hard to effectively make contact, but with the cover of the fog, the companies pressed on. With four machine gun teams providing cover fire, the UN forces moved up the hill and threw grenades into the bunker, but found it deserted. However, while the KPA had retreated, nearby machine gunners rained fire down on the exposed infantrymen. With the fog now getting worse, artillery fire had halted, as had the covering support fire from the machine gun teams.

While taking more casualties, the companies pushed on from the first knoll and towards the second. The KPA began throwing grenades out of the bunker at its peak, making it increasingly difficult for the companies to progress. So the UN pulled its forces back from the knoll and waited. And on 1 September, the fog finally lifted and artillery fire could resume. It was time to make a final push to take the ridgelines for good. So, with the UN artillery peppering bunkers on Hills 773 and 940, the companies pushed on. By 10:00 that morning, the UN troops had taken three key knolls and were moving on both hills.

Tank fire and artillery shells battered the bunkers above, and while the UN had suffered severe casualties, it pressed on. Air support laid waste the ridgeline to the west, effectively boxing in the remaining KPA and PVA soldiers. A halt to the attack was made on 3 September, but the next day air strikes were ordered and napalm was dropped en masse on the ridgeline to drive out the communists. With flamethrower teams now in support, the frontal assault on the middle hill, air strikes, artillery fire and tank support from the road below, the KPA and the Chinese were finally forced to abandon the ridgeline due to the sheer amount of firepower being hurled at them. The enemy forces moved north to strengthen the defences of another ridgeline, which would come to be known as Heartbreak Ridge...



■ The dead and gnarled trees seen in this photo lined most of the ridge, with patches of woodland having been blown away by artillery fire

THE COST OF BLOODY RIDGE

How the battle for the Taebaek Mountains proved to be one of the most costly for both sides

The Korean War was littered with brutal battles, skirmishes and encounters that skyrocketed the casualties on both sides throughout its three long years. The Battle for Bloody Ridge (a name later attributed by US forces following the nightmarish effort it took to finally drive the communists out of the ridgeline) was one of the most shocking, with around 2,700 lives lost among the US, ROK and Philippine forces, all for the prize of three hills overlooking a supply road and the 38th parallel beyond.

On the side of the communists, the cost was catastrophically higher. Despite a tactical advantage in their position – and a number of successful counter-attacks in the early days of the battle – the use of artillery fire, tank shelling and infantry flanking led to around 8,000 dead for the PVA and the KPA. It's estimated another 7,000 were wounded. It was a huge price to pay, and a crushing blow for the communist alliance that had arrived with around 15,000 troops. And while the KPA was driven back, the next phase of encounters would be just as bloody, on a nearby hill known as Heartbreak Ridge.



■ The KPA suffered considerable losses – some of their worst in the whole conflict – but still managed to hold the ridge for over two weeks

FIERCE FIGHT AT HEARTBREAK RIDGE

UNITED NATIONS FORCES PREVAILED
AFTER A MONTH-LONG SERIES OF SHARP
ENGAGEMENTS AGAINST NORTH KOREAN
AND CHINESE TROOPS

WORDS MIKE HASKEW

YANGGU COUNTY, SOUTH KOREA 13 SEPTEMBER - 15 OCTOBER 1951

Until the autumn of 1951, the seven-mile-long hill mass was just one of many that stretched through the rugged country of the Korean Peninsula, nondescript and forbidding, a difficult environment to traverse in the best of conditions.

However, from 13 September to 15 October 1951, during the second year of the Korean War, the area earned its lasting and quite descriptive nickname: Heartbreak Ridge. Following a fierce fight at Bloody Ridge, United Nations forces had compelled the communist North Korean forces to abandon their lodgment there. But the communists did not go far. They reestablished strong defensive positions just 1,500 yards (1,400 metres) north, still contesting the ground north of the 38th parallel near the town of Chorwon.

The UN forces, under General Matthew B Ridgway, and their largest component, the US Eighth Army led by General James Van Fleet, were pursuing a strategy of both offensive and defensive components. They had blunted a North Korean offensive earlier that spring and pushed northward. Their own strength was inadequate to execute a war-winning invasion of North Korea, so the UN strategists determined to advance beyond the 38th parallel and mount limited attacks to extend their lines without becoming vulnerable to a major counterattack or absorbing extreme losses.

Heartbreak Ridge became a focal point of this strategy. Van Fleet ordered X Corps commander General Clovis E Byers to take the hill mass, and Byers handed the assignment to General Thomas de Shazo and his US 2nd

Infantry Division, together with the French Battalion of the UN. Three pronounced peaks, designated by their height in metres, dominated the ridgeline. Hill 894 lay furthest south, three miles (4.8 kilometres) from Bloody Ridge, while Hill 931 was 1,300 yards (1,189 metres) north, and then 2,100 yards (1,920 metres) beyond lay the sharp crest of Hill 851. To the west, the slope ran down to the Mundung-ni Valley, a vital DPRK supply route.

The North Koreans had fortified Heartbreak Ridge with bunkers and machine-gun nests, while artillery and mortar emplacements studded its peaks. The DPRK's 6th Division occupied the defenses, and its 12th Division controlled the hills commanding the Mundung-ni Valley beyond. While Colonel de Shazo contemplated a direct assault against Heartbreak Ridge, the opinions of his staff officers were divided as to the prospects for success. Artillery commander Colonel Edwin Walker asserted that the North Koreans would "fight like hell" for the high ground. The assault went forward anyway, and de Shazo committed a single infantry regiment, the 23rd, and the attached French battalion to the initial attack. Once the 23rd had secured hills 931 and 851, the 9th Regiment would join in and capture the rock-strewn hills.

On 13 September, the attack proceeded in a predictable pattern as American artillery and aircraft pounded the ridgeline and the infantry stepped off to climb the rocky slopes in the face of an enemy that had sheltered in hardened bombproofs and then emerged to man its weapons when the barrage lifted. By the end of the first day, the 23rd Regiment

"THOUGH SEVERAL ARMoured VEHICLES WERE DISABLED OR DESTROYED... THE TANKS CHEWED UP CLUSTERS OF CHINESE AND NORTH KOREAN SOLDIERS AND CUT THE SUPPLY LINES TO THE WESTERN SLOPE OF HEARTBREAK RIDGE"

■ During the long battle for Heartbreak Ridge, infantrymen of the US Army's 27th Regiment take shelter just 40 yards from communist North Korean positions





DEVOTION TO DUTY

US Private First Class Herbert Pililaau sacrificed his own life to save those of his comrades while fighting at Heartbreak Ridge

Herbert Pililaau was 22 years old when US Company C, 23rd Infantry Regiment, was ordered to assault Hill 931, a rocky promontory on Heartbreak Ridge. On the morning of 17 September 1951, the unit was heavily engaged with the North Korean defenders, managing to dislodge them by afternoon. However, it was too soon to celebrate. Company C occupied an advanced position, and a counterattack was coming. At 10pm, two enemy infantry battalions struck. Fighting for their lives, Company C received permission to withdraw, but a single squad remained behind to cover the retirement.

Eventually, only Pililaau was left in front, while his squad leader called in artillery fire. The young soldier emptied his Browning Automatic Rifle into the oncoming communist troops. When his ammunition was exhausted, he threw every available grenade at the North Koreans. He hurled rocks, drew his trench knife, and charged toward the North Korean advance, swinging his fist and slashing with the blade. He was last seen surrounded, fighting to the death. When the remaining soldiers of Company C returned to the position the next day, they found Herbert Pililaau's lifeless body with 40 dead North Korean soldiers strewn around it. Pililaau received a posthumous Medal of Honor, becoming the first Hawaiian to receive the prestigious decoration.



■ Private First Class Herbert Pililaau fought to the death at Heartbreak Ridge and received a posthumous Medal of Honor for his bravery under fire

ENLISTED LEADERS AT HILL 520

A corporal and private stepped into command roles to secure Hill 520 during the Battle of Heartbreak Ridge

Leading a platoon in Company G, 23rd Regiment, at Hill 520, Corporal David Lamb was commanding about 20 men still able to fight after days of exhausting combat. Under covering fire, Lamb led his men to a small knoll and prepared to rush the hilltop. While some soldiers fired at North Korean bunkers, Lamb sent a squad toward the objective, but several men fell wounded.

Another company, led by Private Cliff R High, was committed, but more men were cut down. Lamb's machine gunner yelled that his ammunition supply was exhausted. Eight enemy soldiers leaped into the open, trying to overrun Lamb's position, but they were driven back. Under heavy enemy fire, High was soon down to 11 men, while Lamb counted 12.

60 yards of open ground had to be crossed to reach the summit of Hill 520, and the first attempt to seize it was beaten back. A grenade blast wounded Lamb. High reached the hilltop with a handful of men, but a concussion grenade stunned him. The survivors fell back. Close combat reduced a pair of troublesome bunkers, and High then led the final sweep to the summit. Hill 520 was taken in three bloody hours, and Company G sustained at least 30 casualties.



■ American soldiers prepare to take a hilltop somewhere in Korea during the long, difficult days of 1951. Hill 520 was, no doubt, similarly forbidding terrain

had encountered a beehive of resistance, its advance thwarted by a North Korean infantry regiment firing from concealed fortifications. The possibility of a quick seizure of the ridgeline soon evaporated.

Admitting that he had underestimated the North Korean strength, de Shazo ordered the 9th Regiment to capture Hill 894 the next day. Supported by M4 Sherman medium tanks of the 72nd Tank Battalion along with mortars and artillery, the 2nd Battalion, 9th Regiment took the objective with only light casualties,

but during the next 48 hours the unit lost more than 200 men killed and wounded, while fending off furious North Korean counterattacks that failed to dislodge them. Still, the effort did not relieve the pressure on the 23rd Regiment.

The frustrating and costly initial phase of the Battle of Heartbreak Ridge dragged on for two weeks. The rugged terrain diminished the effects of UN firepower and air superiority, while the movements of tanks and troops were restricted to narrow, twisting roads that were constantly under the watchful eye of the North Koreans and subject to artillery fire.

By 21 September, the new 2nd Division commander, General Robert N Young, had studied an alternate plan suggested by 9th Regiment commander Colonel John Lynch. Elements of the 9th Regiment were sent forward to take hills 867 and 1024 to the southwest. Meanwhile, General Van Fleet ordered General Byers to direct South Korean troops under X Corps command to take Hill 1142, straightening the UN line with the adjacent corps and perhaps spreading the North Korean defenses thinly as they anticipated an envelopment of the entire Heartbreak Ridge complex.

The 23rd Regiment continued its attacks on Hill 931 with little success, but the other thrusts made good progress, with their objectives in hand by 25 September. The North

Koreans did manage to shift troops, particularly their 3rd Regiment, 6th Division, to counter the flanking movements. At Hill 931, the US 23rd Regiment was stalled in a southward attack by the DPRK 15th Regiment, and the French Battalion got into the fight as well. Although American tanks fired from the nearby Sat'ae-ri Valley, destroying a number of North Korean bunkers, the attack bogged down on 26 September.

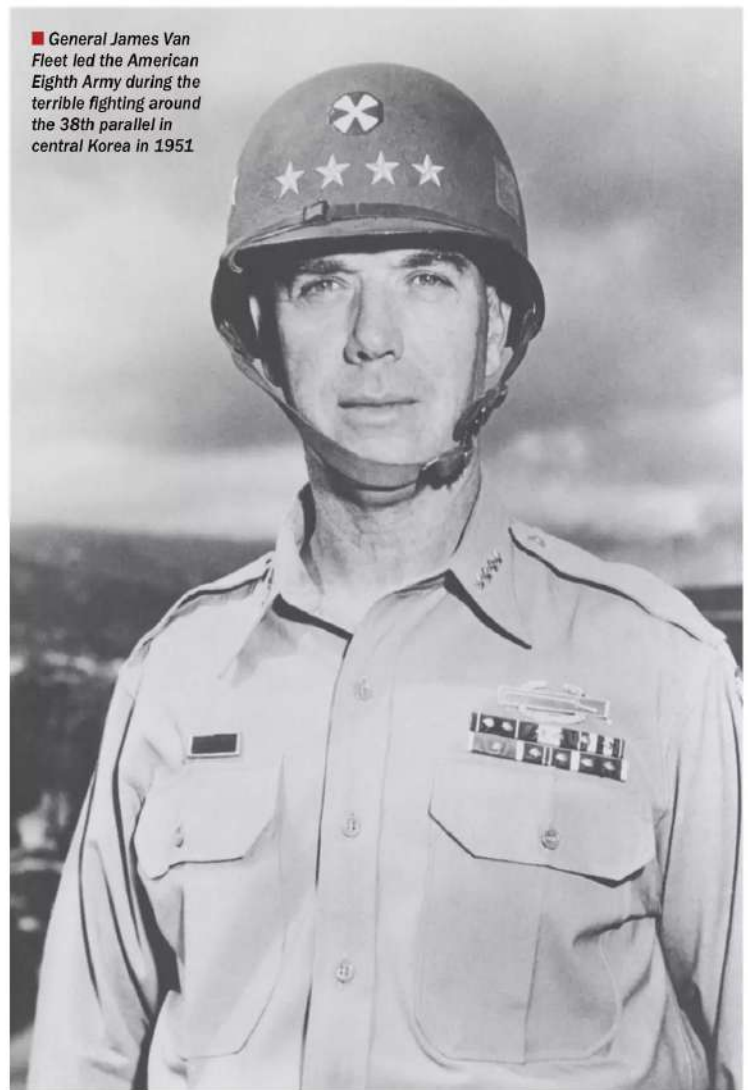
Colonel James Y Adams, commanding the 23rd Regiment, advised Young that it was "suicide" to continue direct attacks on Hill 931, as the unit had absorbed more than 900 casualties. Young called the effort a "fiasco" due to the inability of the attackers to achieve critical mass because forces had to be committed piecemeal amid the rough terrain, and there was a lack of well-coordinated fire support for the multiple attacks against the well-entrenched North Koreans. The bitter experience brought a new perspective to the battle.

In late September, 2nd Division planners proposed Operation Touchdown, an effort by all three of the division's infantry regiments, the 9th, 23rd, and 38th, which would dilute North Korean strength as the DPRK attempted to defend multiple locations simultaneously. Each infantry formation was assigned specific objectives, including hilltops and the Mundung-ni





■ An American M4 Sherman tank fires at a North Korean position near the 38th parallel. Tanks were instrumental in the UN victory at Heartbreak Ridge



■ General James Van Fleet led the American Eighth Army during the terrible fighting around the 38th parallel in central Korea in 1951

“WHILE COLONEL DE SHAZO CONTEMPLATED A DIRECT ASSAULT AGAINST HEARTBREAK RIDGE... ARTILLERY COMMANDER COLONEL EDWIN WALKER ASSERTED THAT THE NORTH KOREANS WOULD ‘FIGHT LIKE HELL’ FOR THE HIGH GROUND”

Valley. An all-out effort by the armour of the 72nd Tank Battalion would supply firepower and mobility in support of the offensive. If all went according to plan, the North Koreans would be forced to retire as their troops were in danger of being surrounded and supply lines might be severed.

American aircraft began an intense preparatory bombing against the area on 4 October, and artillery opened fire the next afternoon. At 9pm on the night of 5 October, the ground attacks got underway. By 9 October, several key hills had fallen to troops of the 9th Regiment and elements of the South Korean 8th Infantry Division. American soldiers seized Hill 666 in a stirring bayonet assault. The 38th Regiment also made good progress, taking an abandoned Hill 485 and pressing on to capture hills 728 and 636, opening the way for engineers to blast trails for the tanks to advance. The 23rd Regiment reported progress against its old nemesis, Hill 931. Moving

steadily, the infantrymen tossed grenades into bunkers that had held out for weeks, and burned out other communist positions with flamethrowers. By noon on 6 October, Hill 931 was in UN hands.

On 10 October, a tank detachment in the Sat’ae-ri Valley pounded Hill 851, the last objective to be taken on Heartbreak Ridge itself. At the same time, Company L, 38th Regiment, joined the 72nd Tank Battalion in a northward thrust up the Mundung-ni Valley as the 23rd Regiment began a general advance. The timing could not have been worse for the communists. The North Korean V Corps had been roughly handled, and as soldiers of the Chinese 204th Division were relieving these troops, the Americans caught them in the open, shredding the communist ranks and inflicting heavy casualties. The tanks ploughed forward, outrunning their infantry support. Though several armoured vehicles were disabled or destroyed by anti-tank weapons that the enemy

had concealed along the attack route, the tanks chewed up clusters of Chinese and North Korean soldiers and cut the supply lines to the western slope of Heartbreak Ridge.

During the days that followed, hilltops continued to fall under UN control, some with relative ease, while others were hotly contested. Three North Korean infantry regiments held on at Heartbreak Ridge, entrenched on Hill 851. While elements of the weary 23rd Infantry Regiment swung toward Hill 520 at the end of a spur running east to west toward Hill 851, American and French soldiers doggedly advanced on the primary objective. At dawn on 13 October, French troops finally dashed to the summit of Hill 851, and all of Heartbreak Ridge belonged to UN forces.

A month of bitter fighting and mopping up ended in hard-won UN victory, but the 2nd Infantry Division had lost 3,700 casualties, half of them in the 23rd Regiment and the French battalion. The butcher’s bill for the communists was staggering, with 25,000 killed or wounded. United Nations commanders concluded that the cost had been high for their relatively minor gains. Such offensive actions with limited objectives were later curtailed, but sporadic fighting along the front continued until the armistice of 1953.

THE BATTLE OF HILL EERIE

A SMALL HILL AMONG RICE PADDIES BECAME A BLOODY FOCAL POINT FOR TWO COMPETING ARMIES GOING NOWHERE FAST

WORDS ROBERT MURPHY

CHORWON, NORTH KOREA 21 MARCH - 18 JULY 1952

Some weeks the Chinese came. Other weeks it was the Americans. That was life for many villages in the early months of the Korean War. Land, communities, homes, changed hands in a massive territorial see-saw of fortunes.

At times, the communist forces of the Chinese People's Volunteer Army launched themselves on a southward advance, taking control of the land and people. In response, the Republic of Korea Army or one of the American divisions would then fight northwards towards the 38th parallel, reclaiming the land from communist clutches.

But as the Korean War dragged on, these huge changes in land-control were whittled down to a relatively narrow stretch of terrain either side of what is now the North-South divide, the Korean Demilitarised Zone (More frequently referred to today as the DMZ).

And by 1952, the bleak, sparsely-populated, freezing, mountainous section of the central Korean Peninsula was the focal point of this bloody deadlock.

Hill Eerie was one of several strategic positions over which the rival forces fought, and upon which many soldiers from both sides of the conflict died.

It was around a mile north of the United Nations' main line of resistance, and a mile and a half south of the communists'. Both armies were slugging it out over a relatively small but strategically important stretch of land.

For the UN forces, it was a vital piece of terrain. If they did not control Hill Eerie, they would be unable to advance further north without suffering catastrophic casualties. Whoever controlled this bleak hill controlled the road network down the slopes – and the connecting roads that branched from it.

In March 1952, Outpost Eerie was in American hands. Company K 179th Infantry had a system where a platoon manned the forward position for five days before being rotated out elsewhere in the theatre. On the afternoon of 21 March, 3rd Platoon left to take over

Outpost Eerie for their five-day duty. They had four squads: two rifle, one light machine-gun squad and a mortar squad. As they left in the afternoon rain, they crossed rice paddies and climbed a two-mile ridge upon which Outpost Eerie sat.

It was an unforgiving place. 120 feet above the rice paddies, Outpost Eerie had a few trees, some bushes and a little sparse grass. The soil, where it had been dug up or blasted away, was yellow. Outpost Eerie had nine bunkers; each could take either two or three soldiers.

3rd Platoon reached Hill Eerie and said farewell to the men they were relieving, who headed back to the main line of resistance. The soldiers settled into their bunkers – many of them had been in these positions before.

Two patrol units from 3rd Platoon were sent out in the evening. At around 11pm, one of these patrols saw what it described as 'a platoon-sized enemy force' moving south.

"We're cocked and primed and ready for anything," said Lieutenant Omer Manley, Commanding Officer of 3rd Platoon.

At around 11.30pm, two flares went off outside Outpost Eerie. The Platoon Sergeant and other soldiers opened fire. But it was just one of the American patrols returning. The defending soldiers had forgotten this was the code for the return of friendly forces to a line.

But when the firing started, the advancing Chinese started attacking anyway. The communists were on a ridge above Outpost Eerie with two machine guns, about eighty yards apart.

Outpost Eerie's machine gunner, Corporal Nick Masiello, had to alternate his fire between both guns and the enemy troops who were trying to enter the position. He was fatally hit and would be replaced.

For the next three quarters of an hour the American troops were able to keep the attacking Chinese soldiers out of Outpost Eerie, despite several of the defenders being injured. There were just 26 of them.

The defences were finally breached a little after 1am. But as the Chinese stormed in, and

■ The Battle of Hill Eerie was played out in mountainous terrain, with fortifications and defences dug into the sheer slopes of this unforgiving landscape



"THE FIGHTING CONTINUED FOR TWO LONG HOURS. IT HAD MOVED FROM ARTILLERY FIRE TO GRENADE LAUNCHES AND NOW BECAME A FIGHT AT CLOSE QUARTERS USING REVOLVERS, RIFLES OR EVEN HAND-TO-HAND COMBAT USING BAYONETS"





■ A sound-powered communication system connected Outpost Eerie's nine bunkers. This was cut during the March 1952 attack by the Chinese

as the bullets and grenades whizzed through the air, each capable of causing a fatality, there were moments of heroism.

Corporal Herman Godwin was a rifleman who doubled as a platoon aid man. He first tried to save the life of that dying machine gunner, Corporal Masiello. He later found a rifleman wounded in the trench outside the bunker. He carried the wounded man to a safer trench and dressed his wounds. As he came out of the bunker, he saw a second rifleman get hit – this time with grenade shrapnel. He pulled this soldier into the same bunker for treatment. And then, almost immediately, a fourth soldier was shot in front of him. This time it was a replacement rifleman with deep wounds in both legs that needed urgent attention.

Corporal Godwin then turned from doctor to warrior. He realised there were no grenades left in the bunker, so he started firing his rifle into the advancing Chinese line until he ran out of ammunition. He saw a Chinese soldier coming along the trench towards him and waited, shooting him point-blank in the head with a handgun. An enemy soldier behind fired at him, but he ducked away, the round denting his helmet. Eventually, when a grenade was thrown at him, he was knocked unconscious. The metal cover of his Bible in his uniform pocket was warped, but he survived.

The Command Post bunker was hit, and all communications were cut to Company K. Captain Max Clark, Commander of Company K, ordered his artillery to move its fire from its current target to Outpost Eerie itself.

This had the desired effect. The Chinese forces started to withdraw. Relief reached Outpost Eerie at 4am. They found that of the 26 men who had left them the previous afternoon, eight had died, four were wounded and two were missing in action. They also found the bodies of 31 dead Chinese soldiers lying around Hill Eerie.

But the Americans decided to abandon Hill Eerie. They retreated to the line of resistance, a mile away. And it would be several months before the hill would be under their control.

By June 1952, Eerie Hill was occupied by Chinese forces. The Filipino 20th Battalion Combat Team (BCT) was charged with taking it back for the UN. The force was led by Fidel Ramos, a young Filipino lieutenant who had recently graduated from West Point Military Academy in New York and had volunteered to fight in Korea.

Lieutenant Ramos grouped his men into four units: a 13-man sniper team, a scout team of ten, a forward observer unit and a rifle team. Before sunrise, at 4.07am on 21 May, they left safely.

For two hours they crawled through rice paddies, reaching their hold-point. Then, as organised, seven F-86 bomber jets flew overhead, dropping napalm bombs on the heavily-fortified Chinese emplacements on the outpost. They began their artillery bombardment of Hill Eerie at the same time.

The Filipinos managed to break through the barbed wire entanglements at 7am, under a storm of grenade and artillery fire, before the scout team reached the Chinese bunkers. They dropped grenades and fired into the bunkers, killing four Chinese soldiers.

FROM LIEUTENANT TO PRESIDENT

Fidel Ramos was a 25-year-old officer tasked with reclaiming Hill Eerie for the Philippine Army. Decades later, he would become the country's president



■ Fidel Ramos at the Pentagon in 1998, towards the end of his presidency. Ramos went to West Point Military College in New York for his training in the 1950s

Fidel Ramos was born in the Philippines in 1928. His father was a journalist who eventually became a legislator and Secretary for Foreign Affairs. Ramos went to West Point military academy in the United States, graduating in 1950. Soon afterwards, he volunteered for the Philippine Expeditionary Forces to Korea, where he was a platoon leader and oversaw the battle of Hill Eerie in June 1952. After the Korean War, he founded the Philippine Army Special Forces unit, before heading up the Philippine Constabulary. During this time, he was accused of human rights abuses. In the 1980s, Ramos was made Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces and Secretary of National Defense. He handled the military operations to quash nine coup attempts against the president, Corazón Aquino. In May 1992, 50 years after the Battle of Hill Eerie, Ramos narrowly won a seven-way election for the Filipino presidency. His term in office saw an economic boom, yet there were power cuts in the country. He opened up the Philippines' economy, but also reinstated the death penalty. He supported the Philippine Drug War, which saw 14,000 people die. He left office in 1997 and remains the Philippines' oldest living former president.

Lieutenant Ramos caught up with the scout team as two Chinese soldiers climbed out of the bunker, raising their guns. Ramos shot them dead. But the Filipinos were running out of grenades. Ramos gave his troops the order to blast the bunkers.

The fighting continued for two long hours. It had moved from artillery fire to grenade launchers, and now became a fight at close quarters using revolvers, rifles and even hand-to-hand combat with bayonets.

The remaining Chinese eventually beat a retreat. The Communist forces had suffered 16 dead, while the Filipino platoon sustained one injury. And they had gained control of Hill Eerie.

But Outpost Eerie was too important for the Chinese to just abandon. On 18 June, communist forces sought its recapture under an intense mortar and artillery attack.

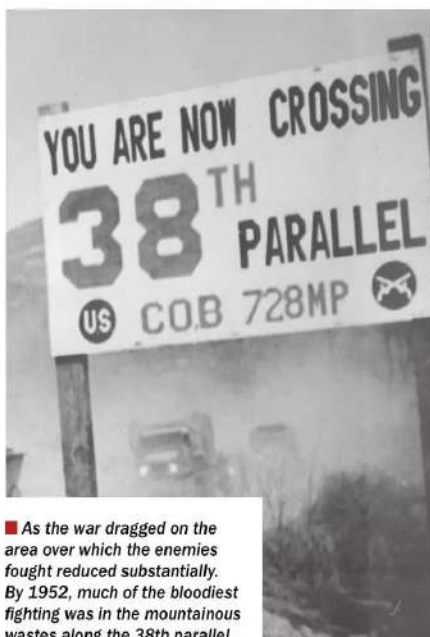
Hill Eerie was now being defended by 19th Philippine Combat Team – nicknamed ‘The Bloodhounds’. And the team was able to repel the Chinese and hold this vital ground.

Two days later, the communists got closer. Chinese troops attacked before dawn on 20 July. They managed to breach the perimeter’s barbed wire and were even able to engage in hand-to-hand combat, fighting with bayonets.

Again, the Filipino troops held their position. They had suffered 24 fatalities. But it was a bloody, failed gamble by the Chinese forces who suffered more than 500 casualties. They would not retake the Hill.

The Battle of Hill Eerie was an important point in the Korean War. It highlighted that there would be no more big territorial gains or losses for either side. That it had become a war of attrition, much like the trench warfare of the First World War.

■ A shell explodes during an offensive in the Korean War. Although the Communist forces suffered greater casualties than UN troops, estimates suggest Southern Allies lost 180,000 men, 33,000 missing and 566,000 injured in the conflict’s three years



■ As the war dragged on the area over which the enemies fought reduced substantially. By 1952, much of the bloodiest fighting was in the mountainous wastes along the 38th parallel

It showed some dark innovation too. The airstrike in advance of the Filipino push of June 1952 used napalm. This was not the first time this fiery, sticky gel was used in warfare – this notorious weapon had first been unleashed in both Europe and the Pacific theatre by American forces in the Second World War. But its use in the Korean conflict would offer further evidence of its effectiveness and was seen by US leaders as an effective trial for its widespread use in the Vietnam War, which would begin two years after the Korean War ended. The UN made it illegal to use napalm against civilian populations in 1980.



FILIPINOS IN KOREA

For many Filipinos, the Korean War is largely a forgotten conflict, but the Philippines was the first Asian country to send forces as part of the UN effort

The first Filipino soldier set foot in Busan on 19 September 1950. Five Battalion Combat Teams from the Philippines would be sent over the next three years – 7,420 officers and men. In November 1950, they were victorious at the Battle of Miudong, the first battle won on foreign soil by a Filipino army.

The Philippine 10th Battalion Combat Team was caught by the Chinese People’s Volunteer Army at Yeoncheon, 60 miles due north of Seoul, during the communists’ Spring Offensive in April 1952. The BCT was cut off, unable to communicate with the retreating US 65th Infantry Regiment. But the Filipinos held their ground overnight, the following morning the Chinese withdrew, having suffered more than 500 casualties.

In 1952, the 20th BCT seized Hill Eerie, and later in the year 19th BCT defended it from a Chinese counter-attack.

And in June 1953, soon before the end of the Korean War, the Philippine forces took part in the bloody Battle of Christmas Hill. Philippine soldiers would remain on the peninsula for another two years before returning home. The Philippine forces represented the fifth largest force under UN command in the Korean War.



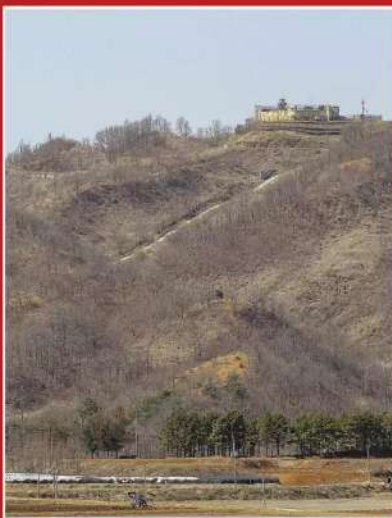
■ Philippine President Elpidio Quirino sent five Battalion Combat Teams to assist the United Nations’ effort during the Korean War

CHINA'S PLAN FOR WHITE HORSE

What was the strategy that China used going into the bloody battle to take White Horse?

While a defecting lieutenant gave the ROK and the UN forewarning with regards to China's plan to attack White Horse, most of its actual battle plans were still a secret. Control of the hill would be exchanged ten times over the ten-day course of the battle, and much of this was down to the blunt force strategy of Chinese command. For the communists, taking White Horse was vital, as it provided a direct route to the South Korean capital, Seoul. If the PVA and the KPA could take the city, then the communists would have a great deal more strength during peace negotiations.

Most of China's ground forces would be directed at the north end of the hill, with the idea of hitting that side as hard as possible with artillery fire, before driving a wedge between either side of the base with a huge force of infantry. It was a shock-and-awe tactic, designed to overwhelm the enemy. At the same time, a number of battalions were sent to flank the hill and divide the UN's forces, which proved successful multiple times as communist forces took control of the hill.



■ It's estimated China sent over 20,000 infantrymen into the fight for White Horse, but suffered heavy troop losses as a result

■ The use of tanks and artillery, as with many other battles in the Korean War, helped the United Nations prevail

THE WAR FOR WHITE HORSE

HOW THE FIGHT FOR CONTROL OF ONE HILL AND ITS TACTICAL POSITION WOULD COST COUNTLESS LIVES IN THE KOREAN WAR

WORDS DOM RESEIGH-LINCOLN

CHORWON, SOUTH KOREA 6-15 OCTOBER 1952

North Korea is a nation filled with undulating hills and mountains, so it's no surprise to learn that these ridgelines and points of elevation proved to be the territory that both sides in the Korean War fought so hard to possess. From Pakchon to Bloody Ridge, hills such as the one known as White Horse became stained with the blood of both sides, with each one won and lost countless time over. So when the United Nations and China moved to take control of a 395-metre hill in a mountainous region in North Korea known as the Iron Triangle, more blood was about to be spilled.

By October 1952, the war in Korea had been raging for over two years, with the Republic of Korea from the south (aided by Britain, the United States and other countries in the United Nations) and the Korean People's Army (supported by China's People's Volunteer Army and the USSR) having ground to an exhaustive stalemate. Battles were often defensive, with either side often battling to hold their positions rather than launching all-out pushes to take new territory. Only seven years removed from World War II, neither side wanted the conflict to spark another global war, but soon news would reach the ROK that the KPA was planning a bold operation to claim control of the tactically significant Iron Triangle.

At this time, the area, specifically a 395-metre (1,296 ft) hill known as Baengma-goji (known as White Horse due to the shape of the terrain) was under control of the ROK. Designated Hill 365 by the United Nations, the crest of this hill, dotted with patches of trees, stretched northwest-to-southeast for around two miles and housed a transportation route that linked either side of the peninsula, making

it of vital importance for ferrying troops and supplies to the war effort due to its direct path to the 38th parallel. Taking it would help the communist alliance form a powerful new base of operations to push towards South Korea.

IMMINENT ATTACK

On 3 October, a lieutenant defecting from the 340th Regiment (114th Division People's Volunteer Army) revealed that China was planning an all-out surprise attack on White Horse and such an operation was imminent. While the ROK feared the information might be a trap designed to redirect their attention and forces, the warning was soon corroborated by other intelligence. Now the ROK and the United Nations had to quickly bolster their defences on the hill in order to protect it from an incoming assault.

For a start, the IX Corps provided the ROK 9th Division with 22 tanks from the 53rd Tank Squadron. Next, the US 73rd Tank Battalion C Company was brought in alongside battalions of artillery, rocket launcher support, and a series of anti-aircraft weapons to be used in a ground role. Major General Kim Jong Oh – the division commander for the ROK on White Horse – began portioning his forces around the site in order to repel an attack on multiple fronts. As a point of elevation, there were various areas the PVA could use to assault the hill, so the ROK had to ensure that every single route was covered appropriately.

The tank battalions and anti-aircraft guns were positioned on the flanks of White Horse in order to cover the valley that ran on either side. On the left forefront, the 30th Regiment from the XI Corps were stationed under the command of Regimental Commander Im Ik-sun,

“DURING THIS FIRST ENCOUNTER, ONE UN ARTILLERY BATTERY ALONE FIRED 1,500 ROUNDS INTO THE ADVANCING ENEMY”

THE AFTERMATH OF WHITE HORSE

How propaganda has affected our view of the true cost of the battle for both sides of the Korean War

China stated that it committed a total of four regiments – the 334th, 339th, 340th, and 342nd – and officially confirmed that its losses numbered approximately 6,700 casualties. The ROK refuted this, stating that its sources revealed China had actually sent seven regiments in total, with a staggering loss of 14,332 (8,234 identified deaths, 5,097 presumed deaths, 1,001 wounded, and 57 prisoners). On the other side of the coin, the ROK stated it committed three regiments – the 28th, 29th, and 30th – and suffered 3,442 casualties (505 killed in action, 2,562 wounded and 391 missing). China then said its own sources revealed a far different picture, with four regiments committed and 9,400 casualties, including 7,000 dead).



■ For both sides of the Korean War, casualty numbers were all about saving face in the wake of peace talks. Admitting to a high loss during the war was seen as tantamount to weakness

while the 29th Regiment, under the oversight of Commander Kim Bongcheol, were charged with protecting the forefront to the right. An extra regiment – the 28th – were placed in reserve just in case additional support was needed. Finally, the Fifth Air Force – which formed part of the United States Air Force Pacific Air Forces (PACAF) – was put on standby to run air support. With the potential for a night attack, spotlights were placed all around the hill, and a flare plane was also requested in order to reveal enemy positions during darkened hours.

THE ASSAULT BEGINS

On 6 October, the attack commenced. The first wave of assaults came from afar, with Chinese tanks and artillery guns peppering the edge of the hill with shells. By the stage, the UN had ordered a bombing run in the areas the shelling had originated, but it didn't deter the Chinese guns and the artillery fire continued for the duration of the battle to come. The first push for the hill lasted nine hours and saw the PVA throwing constant waves of infantry and rocket fire at the crest of the hill from multiple angles. During this first encounter, one UN artillery battery alone fired 1,500 rounds into the advancing enemy. The first push failed, but the second saw China managed to briefly take control of the crest. Around 500 Chinese soldiers were dead by the first day, with the ROK suffered around 300.

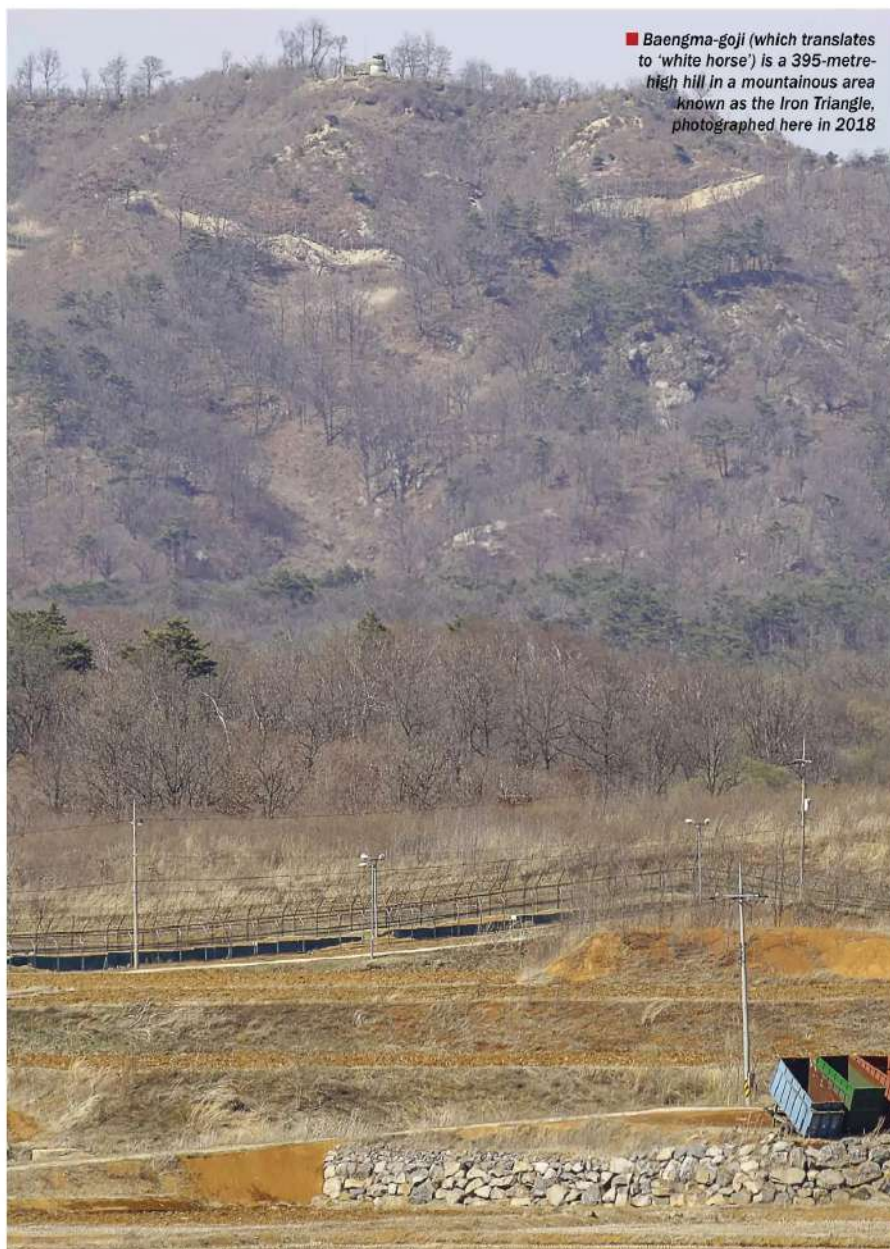
Having been driven back off the crest in the night, the PVA began another push on the morning of 7 October, successfully taking the crest once more. One group of ROK soldiers valiantly fought to hold the red tide back, but were overwhelmed. South Korea's reserve regiments were brought in and they successfully drove the Chinese soldiers out of the trenches on the crest. Meanwhile, China was attempting to drive the ROK forces back by attacking some of the hills surrounding White Horse. However, while some of South Korea's forces were sent to hold the flanking operations on either side, the plan had proved fruitless for the PVA. It was time to commit its entire effort towards the real prize: White Horse itself.

On 8 October, the PVA committed three more battalions to the northern slopes of White Horse, and attempted to take the crest and entire hill for the fourth time. It was the most relentless push yet. Artillery fire on both sides pounded at each other, while Chinese soldiers and ROK infantry exchanged rifle and small arms fire on the crest of the hill. Neither side refused to move or seek the safety of the bunkers when artillery shells struck. The day after, the PVA committed even more troops to the push and finally forced the ROK back onto the rear slopes of the hill. In response, South Korea focused all of its artillery and tank fire on the crest, with the 29th Regiment driving the Chinese off the hill outright.

BACK AND FORTH

The fight for the crest had descended into an exchange of small arms fire and close-quarters combat amid a never-ending wall of artillery fire. Casualties on both sides were mounting, but China was suffered the worst

■ Baengma-goji (which translates to 'white horse') is a 395-metre-high hill in a mountainous area known as the Iron Triangle, photographed here in 2018



■ US armour and artillery played a vital role in driving back the sheer numbers of the Chinese forces



“THE UN SHIFTED ITS CANNONS AND FIRED RELENTLESSLY. IN SECONDS, THE CHINESE REGIMENTS SIMPLY CEASED TO EXIST”

of it. And when news reached the UN and the ROK that the communists had amassed a large reinforcement of extra regiments on the foot of the hill, the UN shifted its cannon and fired relentlessly. In seconds, those regiments ceased to exist and China was driven off the hill once more. By 10 October, China's tactics were singular and unwavering – send thousands of troops up the hill and overwhelm the ROK. But with little tactical variation, the push would often be halted, and for every time they were pushed back, the ROK would take the hill back shortly after. The back and forth continued.

On 11 October, a counter-offensive was made by the ROK, with the 140th Tank Battalion and 51st ROK Infantry Regiment moving off the crest and onto the right-hand side of the slope, while the 73rd Tank Battalion and a company of the 30th ROK Infantry Regiment moved to the left. Both pounded PVA positions at the base of the hill, looking to take out artillery and infantry trenches and halt the influx of attacks. But the Chinese forces kept

pushing on, with the crest itself now pounded into mud and dust while soldiers fought one another with knives and small arms fire. It was utter chaos.

Over the next four days, control of the hill was exchanged multiple times. In total, White Horse changed hands ten times, and both sides paid a heavy price for those gains and losses. Infantry on both sides were depleted, and the ridges surrounding the hill, and the crest itself, had been pounded out of all recognition by ten days of constant artillery barrages. By the time the PVA was driven off the crest for the final time on 15 October, the communists had been routed by air strikes from above, and the greater tactical prowess of ROK commanders. The PVA had believed it could take White Horse by sheer force of numbers, but it proved a fruitless endeavour. The Chinese forces were now being withdrawn in full retreat, although China would later refute this claim, stating it was reorganising its forces in preparation for the next encounter in the war.

■ As the site of one of the Korean War's most bloody battles, monuments have been erected to commemorate the lives that were lost



Images: Alamy

ATTRITION AT OLD BALDY

AFTER MULTIPLE ASSAULTS AND THE POSITION CHANGING HANDS SEVERAL TIMES, HILL 266 REMAINED UNDER CHINESE CONTROL

WORDS MIKE HASKEW

WEST-CENTRAL KOREA 26 JUNE 1952 - 26 MARCH 1953

In May 1952, Major General David L. Ruffner took command of the US 45th Infantry Division fighting under the United Nations flag on the embattled Korean Peninsula. While peace negotiations to end the stagnant, costly Korean War proceeded, both the UN and Chinese and North Korean forces held main lines of resistance that stretched more than 150 miles across the narrow waistline of the divided country.

While the negotiations were conducted at a glacial pace, neither side wanted to absorb the cost in lives and money of a decisive offensive campaign, and the war settled into a stalemate of limited actions, sometimes won by the UN troops and sometimes by the communists, sometimes ending in a tactical draw, but always bloody and hard fought. The story of the fighting at a barren hill nicknamed Old Baldy is indicative of such engagements. The seesaw series of battles for the high ground that was referred to on military maps as Hill 266 ebbed and flowed inconclusively from 26 June 1952 to 26 March 1953.

When Ruffner arrived at his command post north of the 38th parallel near the south bank of the meandering Yokkokch'on River, one of the first things that caught his attention was the close proximity of Chinese positions in the hills just opposite his zone of operations. The communists appeared to have ringside seats, observing every move of the 45th Division and sometimes loosing harassing artillery fire. Just a few thousand yards distant, the Chinese had positioned ten battalions of infantry of the 38th and 39th armies along with an array of big guns. Ruffner wanted these Chinese forward observation posts eliminated and he put together a plan, Operation Counter, to accomplish the task.

Operation Counter was a two-phase endeavour. Ruffner and his staff identified 11 Chinese-held positions to be seized as a forward line of resistance for the 45th Division while also ending the threat of Chinese

incursions. A 12th objective was to be raided and the position destroyed during a follow-up attack. The effort was to get underway on 6 June.

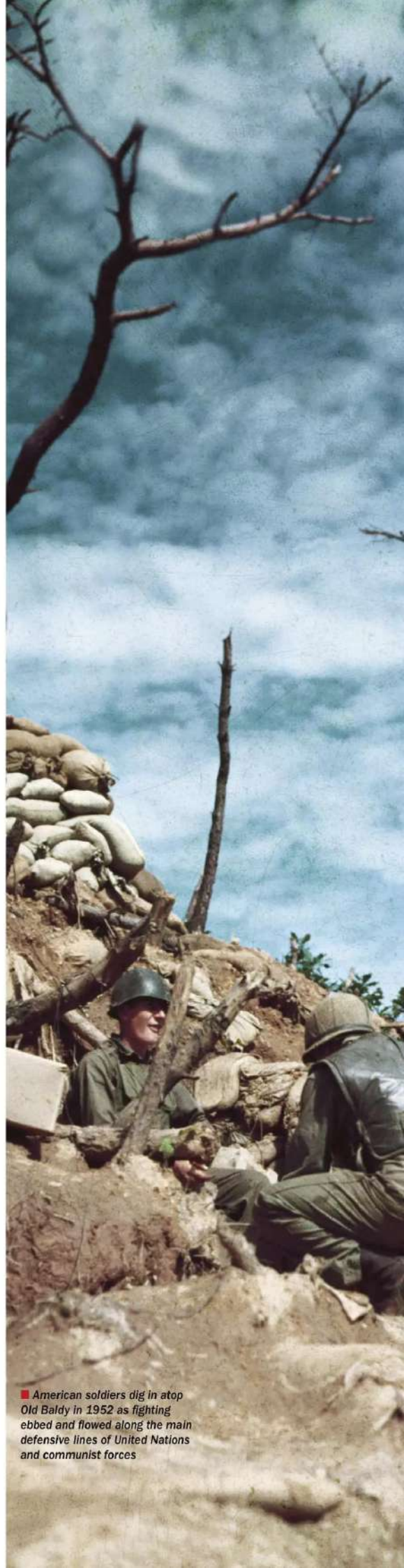
After dark, the Americans moved forward.

At Outpost 11 on Hill 266, already known as Old Baldy because artillery fire had stripped away the trees and underbrush that once grew along its crest, two squads from A Company, 180th Infantry, called in artillery support and secured the high ground just after midnight. Elsewhere, the objectives were seized quickly.

The Americans and their South Korean allies set about fortifying their newly occupied positions, and during the next few days the garrisons, supported by tank and artillery fire from the UN main line, repulsed several Chinese probing attacks. Then, on 11 June, the second phase of Operation Counter was launched. The 180th Infantry, supported by the armour of the 245th Tank Battalion, captured Outpost 8, also known as Eerie, fending off repeated Chinese counter attacks over the next 72 hours. These were followed up with communist assaults against Pork Chop Hill, Old Baldy, and Eerie over the next ten days, which varied in strength but demonstrated the North Korean and Chinese intent to eradicate the UN outposts.

At the end of June the contest for Old Baldy escalated substantially. On 26 June, fighting raged as elements of the 179th Regiment attacked Chinese positions that threatened Outpost 11. Gaining some ground, the Americans dug in and waited. The first Chinese counterattack came about 10pm and failed to make headway. Two more hour-long assaults followed on 28 June and achieved nothing. The Chinese lost more than 300 killed and wounded, while the 179th Regiment counted six dead and 61 wounded across the three separate engagements.

By 30 June, the UN troops had withstood 20 Chinese attacks and endured 4,000 rounds of artillery dropped on their positions. Three more



American soldiers dig in atop Old Baldy in 1952 as fighting ebbed and flowed along the main defensive lines of United Nations and communist forces

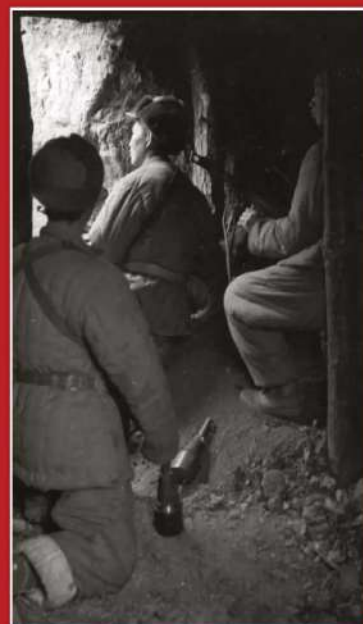
**"WHILE PEACE NEGOTIATIONS
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CHINESE DETERMINATION AT OLD BALDY

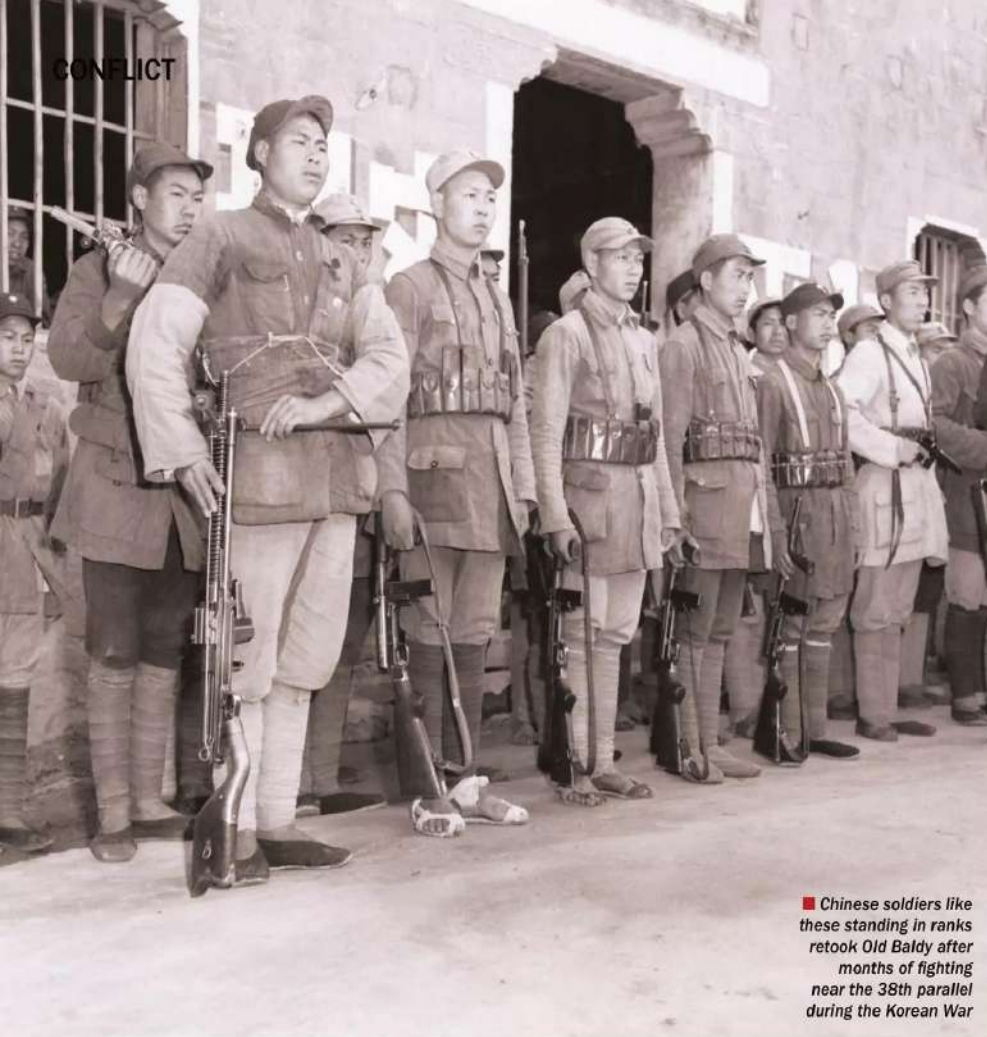
When the Chinese People's Volunteer Army finally retook Old Baldy, their resolute action was celebrated

After retaking Old Baldy from its stubborn United Nations defenders, the 3rd Company, 423rd Regiment, 141st Division of the Chinese People's Volunteer Army was hailed as the "Hero Company of Old Bald Mountain". From the beginning of the fight for Old Baldy, the Chinese were determined to retake the promontory that they had previously held. As the battles dragged on, their official record of the fighting sometimes painted a starkly different picture of the contest from that of UN sources.

Following related action in mid-June 1952, UN forces reported rather light casualties, but a captured Chinese document told a different story. In one action, they recounted attacks by more than five companies of UN troops supported by 15 tanks and a dozen aircraft. The combat, they said, ended with 600 UN soldiers dead and two tanks destroyed. After three more days of fighting, Chinese reports concluded, "We met the attackers and killed and injured them... An estimated enemy force of over 1,000 men who attacked both of the hills were annihilated. Meanwhile, in another spot, four squads making up the main force bravely resisted the enemies in tunnel warfare and achieved victory."



■ A trio of Chinese soldiers observe the movements of opposing troops from the entrance to a bombproof bunker during the Korean War



■ Chinese soldiers like these standing in ranks retook Old Baldy after months of fighting near the 38th parallel during the Korean War

THE COLOMBIAN BATTALION'S COURAGEOUS RECOVERY

An incredible act of courage marked the Colombian Battalion's stirring defense against the Chinese onslaught at embattled Old Baldy

Before overwhelming numbers of Chinese troops forced them to retire from Old Baldy, the soldiers of the Colombian Battalion had fought bravely. Many of them had already seen combat in five previous UN military operations during the Korean War. In late March 1953, the Chinese displayed the bodies of five soldiers, four Colombians and one American, who had been killed in action during the fight for Old Baldy, in an attempt to lure Colombian soldiers into the open to recover them. A call for volunteers rippled through the ranks of the battalion's Company C.

Moments later, Private Alejandro Martinez Roa braved Chinese fire and managed to climb to a position near the summit where the bodies were located. He disabled a booby-trap mine placed under one of the bodies and descended with it. Along the way, he encountered several other Colombian soldiers who had volunteered for the dangerous recovery. Led by Corporal Pedro Limas Medina, these men were headed up Old Baldy for the rest of the bodies. Roa joined them. In the harrowing action that followed, the remaining bodies were recovered. After news of their heroism spread, the Colombian soldiers were recognised with the award of four Silver Star medals by the US Army.



■ General James Van Fleet, commander of the US Eighth Army, visits with officers of the Colombian Battalion during the Korean War

attempts to dislodge the defenders failed on 3 July, and then the Chinese paused until mid-month. The first Battle of Old Baldy was over, but the UN position remained tenuous.

In mid-July, the US commanders initiated the routine rotation of combat troops off the front line. The veteran 2nd Infantry Division relieved the 45th Division. The Chinese observed the rotation and took advantage of the opportunity. On the night of 17 July, they launched a pair of attacks with reinforced battalions. Two companies of the 23rd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Division, held their ground against one of the assaults. However, the second was skillfully executed, and the Chinese gained a lodgment on the slope of Old Baldy. They quickly moved in reinforcements to exploit their hard-won gain.

Following an intense artillery and mortar barrage, the Chinese infantry charged the crest of Old Baldy and took control, warding off 23rd Regiment counterattacks and enduring retaliatory air strikes and artillery bombardment. After three more days of fighting, the Americans had regained only a sliver east of the summit of Old Baldy. The onset of torrential rain suspended further operations, and UN casualties through the third week of July totalled 39 dead, 234 wounded and 84 missing. The Chinese had suffered nearly 1,100 casualties. Nevertheless, they had won the second Battle of Old Baldy.

When the rains ceased at the end of July, the 23rd Regiment set to work to dislodge the Chinese. Attacking with two reinforced companies, they drove the communists from the crest after hand-to-hand fighting. Repeated aerial attacks disrupted Chinese preparations for a counterattack, but they rallied and rushed the high ground under a barrage of 2,500 mortar rounds. The Americans clung doggedly to the crest and drove the attackers away. They reinforced their position with barbed wire and minefields, and successfully repulsed another Chinese assault on 4 August. Still, the issue remained in doubt.

Although the Chinese temporarily refrained from further attacks on Old Baldy after this 'third battle', similar fights for clusters of hills and ridgelines raged elsewhere. UN commanders questioned the value of such assaults, while the lack of progress in the ongoing peace talks remained discouraging.

Inconclusive fighting, sometimes referred to as the fourth Battle of Old Baldy, occurred once again in early October as UN forces grimly retained control. At the same time, the 21st Infantry Regiment of the Royal Thai Army occupied nearby Pork Chop Hill and repulsed repeated Chinese attempts to take that high ground. The Thais fought heroically, and rotated off the front line when the American 7th Infantry Division replaced the 2nd Division. When the Americans of the 31st Regiment, 7th Division assumed the positions formerly occupied by the Thais, they found a message scrawled on the wall of a bunker. It read: "Take good care of our Pork Chop."

In March 1953, Chinese forces launched a concerted effort to reclaim Old Baldy and the surrounding hills. On 1 March, they opened a tremendous artillery bombardment, pounding UN positions with 8,000 rounds. Three weeks

later, two Chinese Army divisions, the 141st and 67th, hit Old Baldy, Pork Chop Hill, and neighbouring Hill 191 simultaneously. The Chinese 1st Battalion, 141st Division, led by commander Hou Yung-chun, stormed Old Baldy after the division's political officer had selected its 3rd Company to lead the advance and carry the 'victory flag' to the summit.

Opposing the Chinese onslaught, the Colombian 3rd Infantry Battalion had been commended for heroism under fire during previous battles. The only ground troops committed to the UN effort during the Korean War by a Latin American country, they originally numbered nearly 1,100 men under Lieutenant Colonel Alberto Ruiz Novoa. At 8:30pm on 23 March, the Chinese hit A Company of the Colombian Battalion, and despite assistance from B and C companies, the Colombians were forced to withdraw.

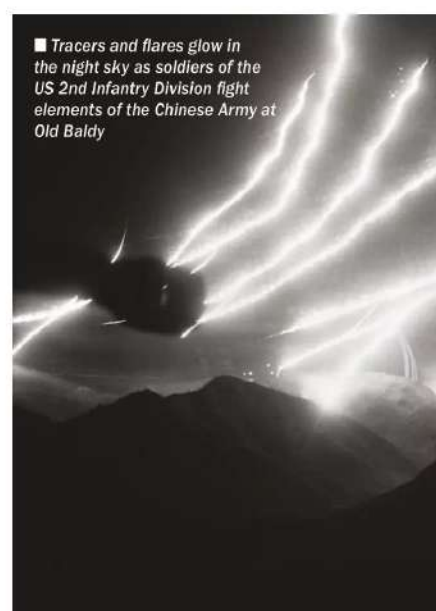
The Chinese renewed their attack about half an hour later. Apparently, intercepted communications from Hou Yung-sun noted that the assault was not proceeding well. The response to his message was an order from higher command to take Old Baldy or face the consequences. Chinese reinforcements bolstered the effort, and their overwhelming numbers prevailed after ferocious hand-to-hand fighting. Kao Yung-ho, a Chinese soldier of the 3rd Company, shouted, "This victory belongs to our company commander!"

While the Colombians rallied and requested reinforcements, UN commanders decided to abandon Old Baldy, ordering a torrent of artillery

fire on the Chinese troops swarming the crest. They considered abandoning Pork Chop Hill but decided against it, holding fast there – probably somewhat as a matter of pride. During the fifth and final battle for Old Baldy the Americans lost 307 dead; the Colombian Battalion saw 95 killed, 97 wounded, and 30 missing, a staggering 20 per cent casualty rate. Chinese forces lost 311 killed.

In the coming months, more tactical combat took place around Pork Chop Hill and other high ground in the area. For the remainder of the war, however, Old Baldy served as a Chinese forward observation post. The fight for the barren hilltop ended with the opposing lines essentially where they had been a while, blood-drenched year earlier. Like so much of the Korean conflict, a lot of arms were spent and lives lost or changed irrevocably on a battle over a small piece of ground that changed hands several times but ultimately remained in the possession of its initial defenders. The tactical advantage of the hills and high ridgelines was not given away lightly.

“CHINESE REINFORCEMENTS BOLSTERED THE EFFORT, AND THEIR OVERWHELMING NUMBERS PREVAILED AFTER FEROCIOUS HAND-TO-HAND FIGHTING. KAO YUNG-HO, A CHINESE SOLDIER OF THE 3RD COMPANY, SHOUTED, ‘THIS VICTORY BELONGS TO OUR COMPANY COMMANDER!’”



■ Tracers and flares glow in the night sky as soldiers of the US 2nd Infantry Division fight elements of the Chinese Army at Old Baldy



■ United Nations soldiers trudge toward a supply point where they will receive food rations during the battle for Old Baldy in 1952

THE DEFIANCE OF OUTPOST HARRY

HOW A SMALL GROUP OF GREEK AND AMERICAN SOLDIERS HELD BACK THE TIDE OF OVER 13,000 CHINESE SOLDIERS

WORDS DOM RESEIGH-LINCOLN

IRON TRIANGLE, CENTRAL KOREA 10 - 18 JUNE 1953

The Korean War was a game of numbers, a clash of nations where possessing the larger figure didn't always lead to victory. For much of the conflict, North Korea's Korean

People's Army (KPA) had relied heavily on the support of the Soviet Union and China's People's Volunteer Army as it attempted to unite both sides of the peninsula by force. While the Soviet Union resigned itself to providing munitions and the occasional airstrike, China brought tens of thousands of troops along with artillery, tanks and other modern means of warfare.

The PVA's tactics were one of simple brutality. Strike the enemy hard and with large numbers. Overwhelm them. Dominate them. It was an approach that brought it both success and abject failure and it would form the crux of its plan to take a strategically vital station known as Outpost Harry. Situated on a tiny hilltop which formed part of the Iron Triangle (an elevated region that played host to some of the war's most bloody skirmishes, including the Battle of White Horse and Battle of Pork Chop Hill), this small military installation sat right on the most direct route to Seoul, the South Korean capital.

For the KPA and China, taking Seoul was the number one priority. If it fell, the communist alliance would control the most important city in the south, and this could prove the catalyst that would drive the United Nations out and the ROK (Republic of Korea) and its armies into submission. However, by June 1953, the war had been raging for three long years and both sides had spent countless lives fighting over a handful of ridgelines, villages and outposts. Exhaustion, despondency and desperation

were setting in. For China and the KPA, Outpost Harry represented a do-or-die situation that had to be won at all costs.

UNDER FIRE

Located 60 miles north of Seoul, the 1,280 feet-high hill on which Outpost Harry sat was located in an area that placed it in constant danger of communist attack. Around 320 yards to the south was a communist-controlled area known as Star Hill, which the ROK and United Nations suspected would serve as a launch pad for a future assault. It was around 100 yards from the now largely static main line of resistance (MLR) and 425 yards from United Nations Command. Both sides were in constant view of one another, making movement and the distribution of supplies difficult.

Such overwatch also caused an issue with resupplying the small contingent of Greek and American soldiers charged with the outpost. Outpost Harry benefitted from such a high elevation, but it also meant the service road that led from the MLR to the rear of the hill was largely exposed to PVA sniper fire and mortar rounds. Supply runs would get through, but often under the cover of darkness, and even then there was never a certainty such a run would make it through. Even the presence of two further outposts nearby – named Tom and Dick, respectively – weren't enough to perturb China's efforts to hamper the UN.

There was also another important reason why China desired Outpost Harry. The hill on which it sat blocked the communist view of the Kumwha Valley, which held a portion of the MLR. The entire line that ran east to west across the peninsula was maintained and protected by

■ The Battle of Outpost Harry was one of the last major encounters of the Korean War before the armistice was signed on 27 July 1953

"BY 15 JUNE, THE US INFANTRY FORCES HAD SUFFERED HUNDREDS OF LOSSES AND NEEDED ASSISTANCE. SO THE GREEK EXPEDITIONARY FORCE (GEF) WAS SENT IN TO ASSIST"





OUTPOST HARRY: THE AFTERMATH

The numbers behind Outpost Harry tell a bloody tale written in the blood of both sides



■ Approximately 88,810 rounds were fired by the Chinese during the battle. However, the UN fired 368,185 rounds collectively

While the Battle for Outpost Harry served as one of the final encounters in the Korean War – the entire conflict would come to an unofficial end a month later – it was no less violent than any of its previous skirmishes. By the time the battle was over on 18 June 1953, approximately 102 UN soldiers from both the US and Greece were dead, with 553 wounded and 44 reported missing. The 5th Infantry Regiment suffered the worse casualties with 68 KIA and 343 wounded. The Sparta Battalion of the Greek Expeditionary Force endured 15 deaths and 36 killed in action.

As the sole contributor to the attacking forces, the PVA suffered considerable losses in its attempts to take Outpost Harry and control a strategic lynchpin in the Iron Triangle north of Seoul. According to figures gathered by US intelligence in the aftermath of the battle, China sent 3,600 soldiers on the first attack, 2850 in the second and over 300 in the attacks of the following three days. In the final attack, it's estimated around 3,000 assaulted the outpost. US intelligence reports claim 1,450 were killed and a further 3,800 were wounded. Chinese reports played down this figure, stating it only suffered 780 casualties.

the US 8th Army. However, if Outpost Harry fell, this section of the MLR would be completely exposed to potential artillery and mortar fire, and could cause the entire divide to shatter under the force of China's military might.

THE RED TIDE

On 10 June 1953, word reached Outpost Harry that an attack was imminent. At this time, only a single unit – K Company of the US 15th Infantry Regiment – was stationed on the outpost. Its commanding officer, Captain Martin A Markley, relayed the news to his men and ordered them to begin fortifying the outpost. With only 100 or so men, the news revealed the US soldiers were facing the first wave of 3,600 PVA infantry. They were outnumbered by 13 to 1, but that didn't deter them from their orders: hold Outpost Harry at all costs.

At nightfall, the attack began, with the PVA using heavy barrages of artillery fire to soften up the defences. The defenders used intense waves of mortars, gunfire and napalm to slow the attack up the slope, but the Chinese soldiers seemingly kept coming. Despite heavy losses, the PVA emerged over the slopes and began assaulting the immediate trenches. Most of the soldiers in K Company took refuge in nearby bunkers. Then the Chinese soldiers heard the boom of artillery fire and looked to the skies – the UN was using VT fuses in their shells, enabling them to explode above the infantry and discombobulate them while preserving the trenches of the outpost. The Americans emerged and used the barrage to drive the Chinese back over the slopes.

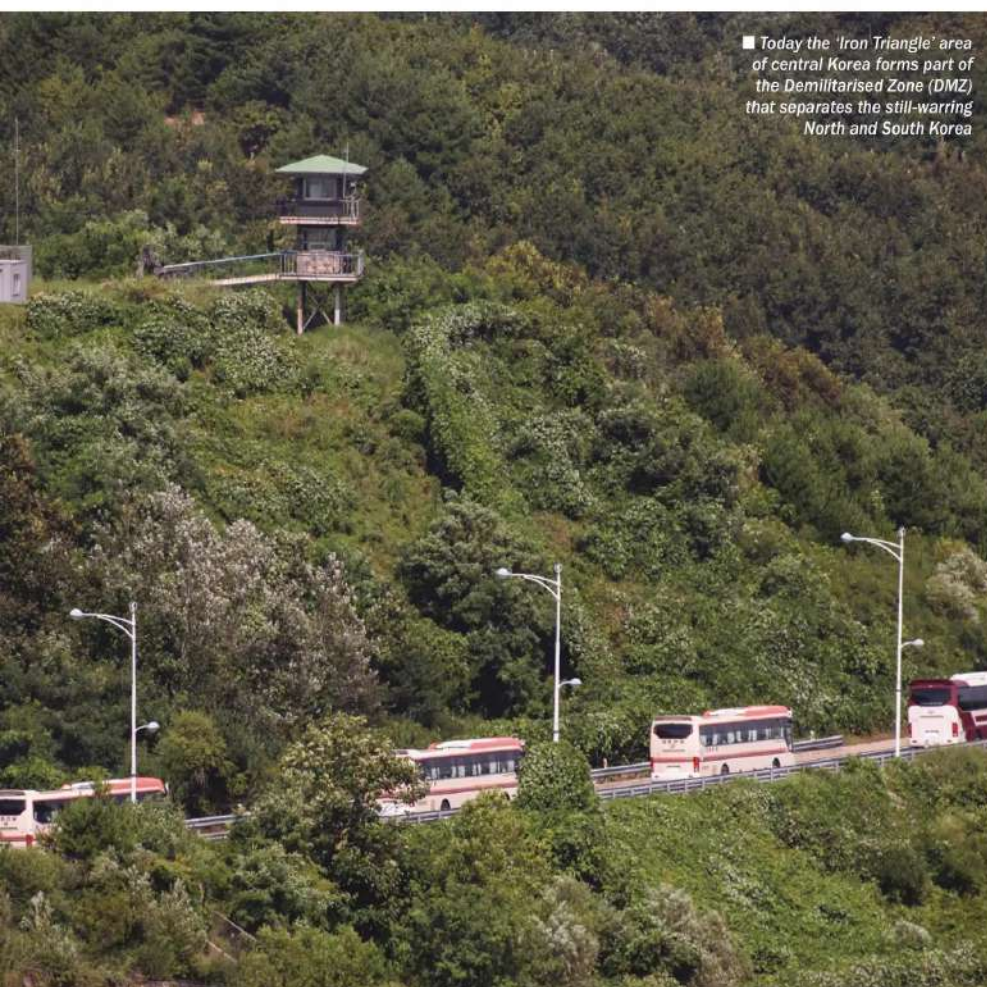
K Company had survived the first assault but at a heavy cost. All but a dozen of the defenders were alive – the rest were either wounded, dying or KIA. As morning broke, they were soon reinforced by the arrival of a new platoon, and then entirely replaced by the arrival of the 3rd Battalion. A platoon from the 15th Infantry was also sent to support them. Meanwhile, a contingent of armour from the Heavy Tank Company – also of the 15th – and a single platoon of infantry were ordered into the valley to the east of the outpost, to serve as a diversion that would divide the Chinese forces.

COVER OF NIGHT

By 11 June, B Company from the 15th and B Company from the 5th were leading the defence of the outpost. As the day wore on, the second assault began much as the first had done, with an intense wave of artillery rounds that pulverised the trenches and any soldiers unlucky enough to be caught in the shellfire. The artillery rounds continued into the night, with the PVA using the cover of darkness and the onslaught of their cannons to sneak up the slopes. An intense close-quarters gunfight ensued as the Chinese once again took the initial trenches, but by 05:45 the next day the communists had been driven out once more.

By the morning of 12 June, the defenders of the outpost had been replaced, the wounded carried out and supplies redistributed. A Company and L Company of the 15th were now in charge of the defence, supported by the 10th Combat Engineer Battalion, who were re-laying

■ Today the 'Iron Triangle' area of central Korea forms part of the Demilitarised Zone (DMZ) that separates the still-warring North and South Korea



“FOR THE KPA AND CHINA, TAKING SEOUL WAS THE NUMBER ONE PRIORITY. IF IT FELL, THE COMMUNIST ALLIANCE WOULD CONTROL THE MOST IMPORTANT CITY IN THE SOUTH”

mines around the slope and outer trenches. At 22:00, mortar and artillery fire once again warned the companies on the hill that the Chinese were preparing to attack. Despite once again taking heavy losses, the PVA managed to take the slope but were forced back down it 45 minutes later. At 02:08, the Chinese changed tactics and attacked from the north, northeast and northwest simultaneously, succeeding in taking a trench on this side of the outpost. By 04:50 the communists had lost the trench thanks to the tireless defence by L Company and the divisionary fire of the tanks in the valley east of the outpost.

On 13 June, defence of Outpost Harry fell to C Company of the 5th. The front was relatively quiet until around 02:55 when a new barrage of artillery fire preceded a new move from the PVA. This time, the communists were moving towards the eastern and western sides of the outpost, focusing fire on the slope while withdrawing their dead. The UN focused its artillery and mortar fire and the Chinese were forced to withdraw soon after. By 14 June – with G Company from the same regiment now in defence – another attack commenced this time at around 01:25, with the communists taking trenches at the rear of the hill.

By 02:22, more communist forces were bolstering those that had taken the first trenches, but E Company had arrived to reinforce the defenders. The fighting had now degenerated to intense gunfights in the dark with handguns and grenades. A tank division had been dispatched to distract the PVA, and by 03:45 the enemy was finally driven out of the trenches. By 15 June, the US infantry forces had suffered hundreds of losses and needed assistance. So the Greek Expeditionary Force (GEF) was sent in to assist. Known as the ‘Spartan’ Battalion, the GEF helped re-lay mines, set barbed wire and reinforce key defence positions over the next two days.

On 18 June, the final push from the PVA took place. At around midnight – as per tradition by this point in the fight – artillery fire and mortar rounds rained down on the outpost, with two attacks coming from the northwest and northeast sides of the hill. Neither push was successful. However, by 02:40 the Chinese troops were once again attacking with full force from the north, and they managed to take the opening trenches by 03:13. For almost an hour the communists were held from progressing any further by the immovable force of N Company and the Spartans. Finally, by 04:02, the Chinese were driven back and out of Outpost Harry for good.



■ The Greeks nicknamed Harry ‘Haros’, the modern version of Charon, the ferryman who carried the dead into the mythical underworld of Hades

RECOGNITION AND HONOUR

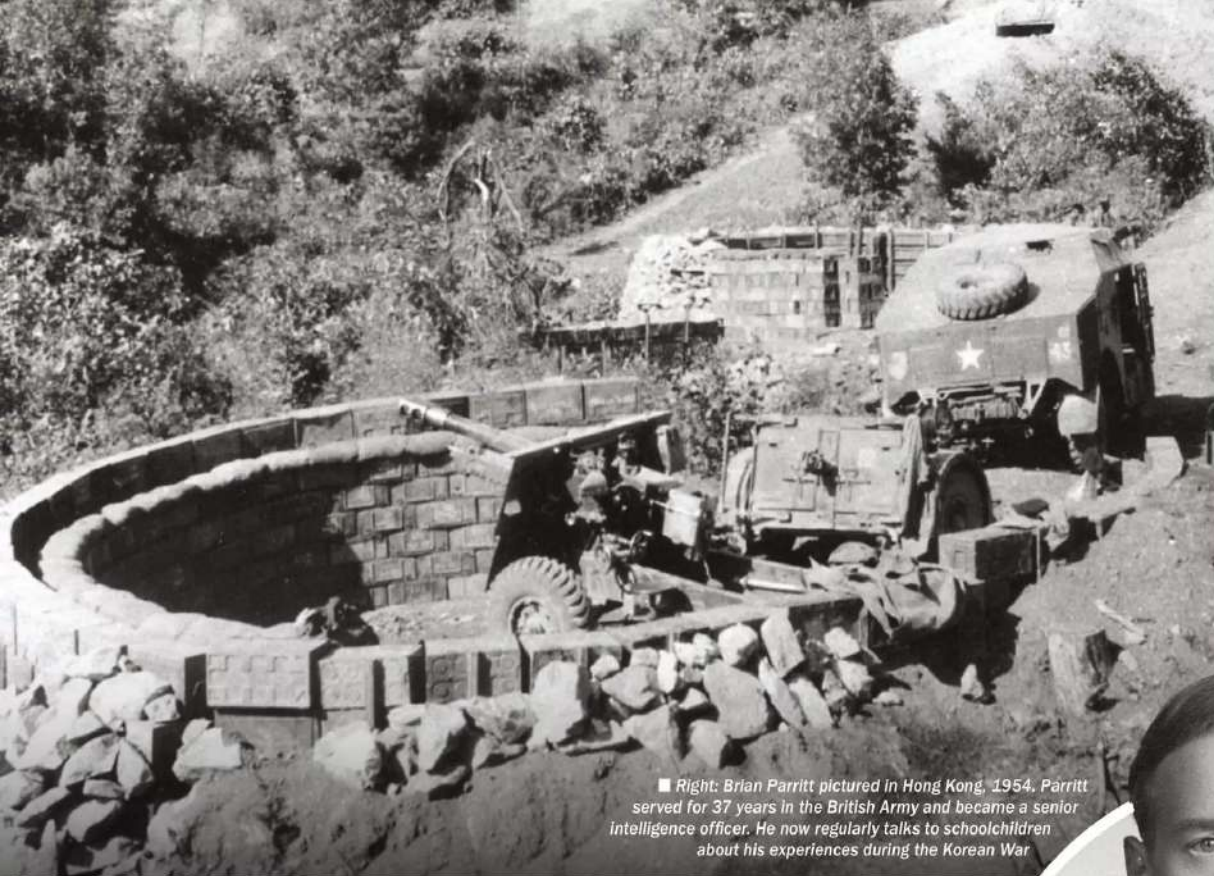
The combined forces of the US and Greece helped keep the PVA back, and it earned them some of the highest honours

The orders given to the US and Greek soldiers defending Outpost Harry were chillingly simple: defend it at all costs. Even this late in the war, the loss of the station could be the final opening the PVA needed to pry open the MLR and make the push for Seoul. It would have changed the armistice talks and likely reshaped the peninsula forever. But the UN forces prevailed, despite incredible odds against. And, when the dust had settled and the Korean War had come to and end on 27th July 1953, the US bestowed some of its highest honours on those that served in Outpost Harry's defence.

For the first time in US military history, five rifle companies – four American and one Greek – were collectively awarded the Distinguished Unit Citation (now called the Presidential Unit Citation) in recognition of their valiant efforts in the face of an unwavering enemy onslaught. These companies were K Company from the 15th, F Company from the 65th and B Company from the 15th (which all formed part of the 3rd Infantry Division). They were joined by A Company, 15th Regiment (of the 5th Regimental Combat Team) and the Greek Expeditionary Force (GEF).



■ Georgios Koumanako was the commander in charge of the Greek Expeditionary Force that played a vital role in the latter part of the battle.



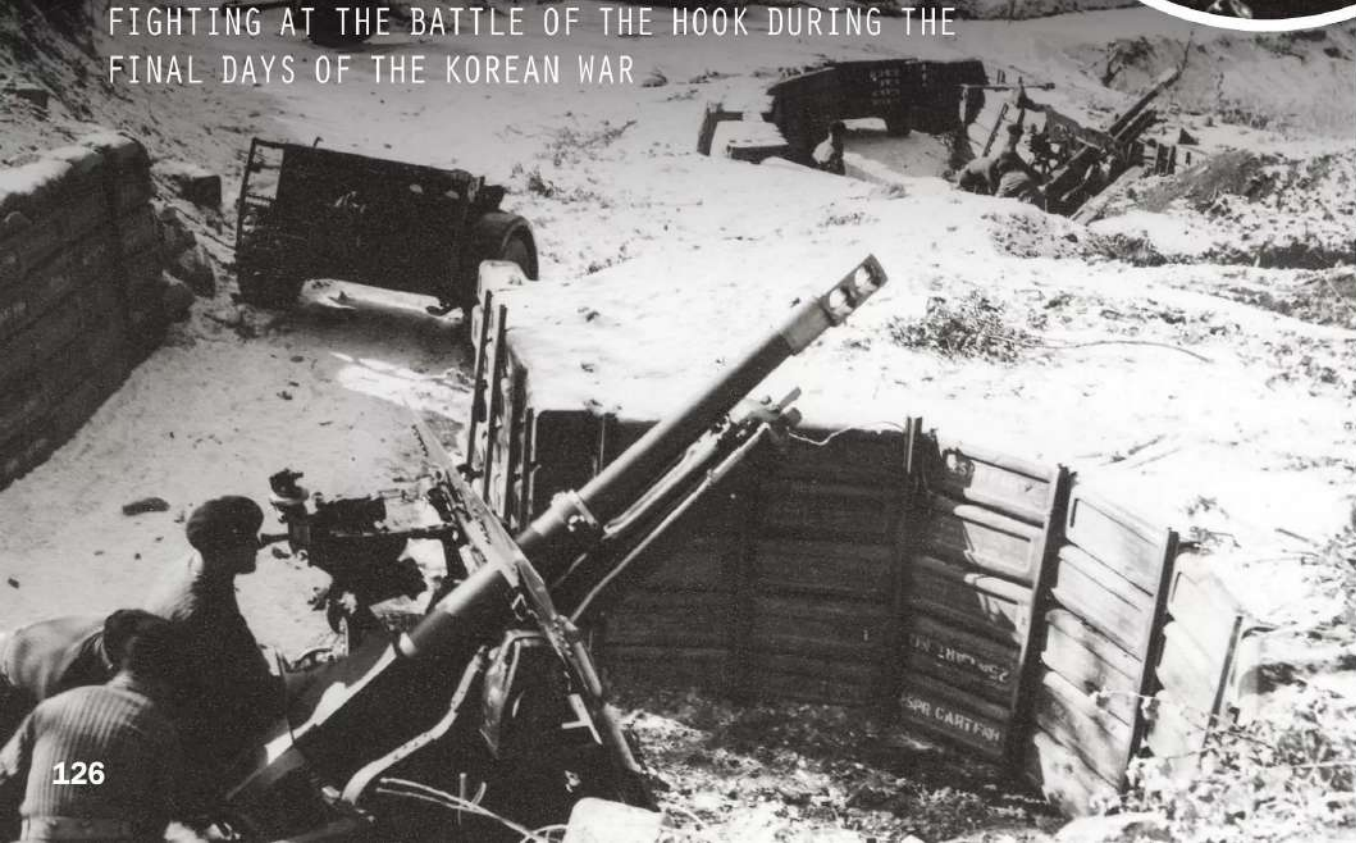
■ Right: Brian Parritt pictured in Hong Kong, 1954. Parritt served for 37 years in the British Army and became a senior intelligence officer. He now regularly talks to schoolchildren about his experiences during the Korean War



SURVIVING THE HOOK

AN INTERVIEW WITH BRIGADIER BRIAN PARRITT CBE

THIS BRITISH VETERAN TELLS THE GRITTY STORY OF FIGHTING AT THE BATTLE OF THE HOOK DURING THE FINAL DAYS OF THE KOREAN WAR





■ The four 25-pounder guns that made up Baker Troop. The artillery pieces were numerically designated and positioned in four separate gun pits. The image featuring Baker Four was taken the morning after the Battle of the Hook, and the piles of empty cartridge cases can be seen



WORDS TOM GARNER

It is July 1953 and the Korean War is only days away from ending. Nevertheless, fierce fighting has taken place at a bitterly contested ridge called 'the Hook' between United Nations forces and Chinese soldiers. This position is blocking the Chinese advance to Seoul, and they have been continually beaten back by UN forces, including men from 'Baker Troop', 20th (Field) Regiment, Royal Artillery.

One of the soldiers in Baker Troop is Second Lieutenant Brian Parritt, a young but experienced officer who has been fighting at the Hook since Christmas 1952. Now, on the eve of the armistice, he spots two Chinese soldiers in No-Man's-Land and orders his four guns to fire. However, his order is picked up by the high command, and before Parritt knows what is happening, all of the UN artillery is firing on these two soldiers under his apparent direction.

For Parritt, this was only one of many extreme incidents that took place during his service in Korea. He spent almost his entire wartime service at the Hook and was wounded during this final battle in May 1953. For over seven months Parritt and his comrades in Baker Troop fought against the Chinese and the weather in static conditions that were reminiscent of World War I. Now a retired brigadier, Parritt modestly tells a compelling story of serving in a war that has been wrongly neglected, but is now more relevant than ever.

A FAMILY OF GUNNERS

Born in British India, Parritt came from a military family, and he was the fourth generation to serve in the Royal Artillery – after his father, grandfather and even a great-grandfather who fought in the Crimean War. With his family history, Parritt was ambitious to become a regular soldier but joined the British Army as a national serviceman. "I joined in November 1949 at Oswestry as a gunner and was an acting, unpaid lance-bombardier, which was the most difficult appointment I had in 37 years! I was trying to control a barrack room of Liverpool guys, but I then passed the necessary board and went to regular officer training at Sandhurst."

Parritt finished his artillery officer's training in February 1952 and deliberately sought active overseas service. "I knew the 20th Field Regiment was going to Korea so I applied with my friend Shaun Jackson and luckily we got selected." Upon selection, Parritt sailed to Hong Kong in August 1952, where his active deployment was confirmed. "Just after we arrived the colonel called us all on the square and said, 'I've been posted to Korea'. He then paused and said, 'and you're all coming with me!' That's when we knew it was true that we were going to Korea, and there was a hectic period of almost constant training. It wasn't like peacetime, it was training on concentrated fire, plans, drills and deployments."

ARRIVAL IN KOREA

Parritt was now a fully commissioned second lieutenant and was posted to Baker Troop, which formed part of 12 (Minden) Field Battery, 20th Field Regiment RA. Baker Troop's distinctive name had its origins in military phonetic spelling and the artillery's command structure: "There are three batteries in each regiment and I was in 12 (Minden) Battery. In each battery there are two troops, and 12 Battery was the senior battery. There was 'Able' and 'Baker' Troop followed by 'Charlie' and 'Delta' in the next battery, etc."

Parritt finally arrived in South Korea at Pusan in December 1952. By this time the war had been raging for over two years, and Parritt's first impressions of Korea were grim as he was transported to the front line: "It was dark and desolate. Pusan was in total ruins but we didn't see much of it. We went out very quickly after two or three days in the train all the way up to the front line. December in Korea is a cold, dark place and you were struck by the desolation and lack of people. It was pretty depressing countryside all the way up until we reached our gun positions."

Parritt's final destination would be a position that saw some of the heaviest fighting in the closing stages of the war, where he would stay until July 1953.

THE HOOK

Baker Troop had been posted behind a crescent-shaped ridge that was nicknamed 'The Hook'. Fighting between UN and communist forces was now largely confined to areas around the 38th parallel, and the Hook was located near Kaesong. The communist forces of China and North Korea had failed to overrun South Korea by mid-1952, and although negotiations were being held for an armistice,

"DECEMBER IN KOREA IS A DARK, COLD PLACE AND YOU WERE STRUCK BY THE DESOLATION AND LACK OF PEOPLE. IT WAS PRETTY DEPRESSING COUNTRYSIDE ALL THE WAY UP UNTIL WE REACHED OUR GUN POSITIONS"

the war continued. Both sides reinforced their positions and a tactical stalemate ensued, with fighting confined to bloody struggles for strategic hills around the eventual demarcation line. The Hook and another large ridge called 'Hill 355' became particularly contested areas because they were located a few kilometres northwest of the confluence of the Samichon and Imjin Rivers. These rivers dominated the ancient invasion route to Seoul, and holding them was therefore vital.

By the time Baker Troop arrived behind the Hook the mobile movements of previous forces had stabilised and become static. "We actually stayed in the same position. There was no name; it was just a field behind the Hook area. We were the third Royal Artillery regiment but the first had gone right up to the Yalu River and back again supporting the Glosters, Ulster Rifles and Northumberland Fusiliers. They were always on the move, but by the time we got there it was a static front line."

Parritt noticed that the area around the Hook eerily resembled the Western Front of World War I: "There was a line of hills, which we occupied with our gunner regiment from behind. On our line of hills, various battalions

■ Below: Brian Parritt (second from left) with the sergeants of Baker Troop. Parritt recalled that it was the sergeants who were the most responsible for the guns' efficiency

■ Right: Captain Bill Miller was killed in action on 2 March 1953. Parritt remembered his death as "a great shame. He had been a captain in Normandy and I was a sproggy little lieutenant, but he was very kind and considerate"





would come to change occupying the Hook or Hill 355 in turn. Then there was the Samichon River valley and a similar line of hills on the other side, with barbed wire on their side, more barbed wire on our side and mines in the middle. It was totally shell-pocked and barren, and there were no trees because they had all been blown down. It was just a bleak landscape that was similar to pictures of the Somme."

20th Field Regiment relieved 14th Field Regiment RA on Christmas Day 1952 in an "ice bound valley" and Parritt recalled relieving his predecessor: "He gave me a bottle of whisky and said, 'Good luck!'"

LIFE ON THE FRONT LINE

Baker Troop had inherited four gun pits along with several reinforced "holes in the ground", including a command post and sleeping quarters for the officers and the men. As a second lieutenant, Parritt rotated command of four 25-pounder guns, although he was the junior officer within the troop. "There were three officers: a captain, lieutenant and a second lieutenant who was the troop officer. The guns were each commanded by a sergeant in a detachment of six. There were four gun pits, and the men lived in those little holes all the time. I suppose there were about 40-45 guys there altogether."

Parritt maintains that it was the sergeants who bore the most responsibility for the guns. "Actual responsibility would totally fall on the sergeants. I was sitting in the comparative warmth of the command post and would order, 'Target, target.' They would have to run out of their 'hoochie' pit, translate the fire orders that were coming over the Tannoy, move the gun into position, elevate it sideways and then give the order to fire."

Baker Troop fired its guns for months at determined Chinese attacks. "It was pretty constant and the Chinese were very aggressive. They kept attacking, and we had a thing called 'DFSOS' [defensive fire SOS]. When the guns weren't firing they were always on a particular position. The OP [Observation Post] officer would go with the company commander and say, 'Which is your most vulnerable place?' in the entry leading up to the company position. He would call the DFSOS so that when the guns weren't firing they would always be laid on. For example, if there was an attack during the night he would shout 'DFSOS! Bang!' and the guns would be immediately firing."

Despite the static warfare, Baker Troop was kept busy. "There was constant activity. All the battalions and companies were continually doing standing patrols, which would go out fairly close to our wire to stop anything coming, or go on fighting patrols, which would go down past the Samichon into the Chinese lines. There were calls for fire every night, and we also had a thing called 'harassing fire'. At night, two guns from each troop would go forward much closer to the front line, because there would be targets. If you fired at a place at two o'clock, you'd fire at another place at ten past and so on just in the hope that you'd knock off their resupply train. We would have aircraft flying over and they would see movement well back."



Harassing fire tasks were performed in all weathers, and Parritt remembered the extreme cold of the Korean winter even though he lived in slightly warmer conditions than his men in the OP: "I always remember those harassing fire tasks through the winter. The gun numbers [sergeants] used to laugh of course because they were always having to be out and we were in 'the warm', but it wasn't quite like that. We had a paraffin stove to have coffee or tea that would be scalding hot. However, when you put it down to go out and give your fire orders (which would take about two or three minutes) it would have turned solid when you came back!"

The Korean winter was a notorious experience for all troops during the war and even the guns were affected by the cold. "The guns had to be moved all the time because they would freeze into the ground. The gunners would have to keep moving them through the night so that they could be moved."

Nevertheless, despite the freezing weather, Parritt considered himself to be much better off than his British predecessors: "When the Argyll and Middlesex Regiments arrived [in Korea] they were in their summer kit, but by the time we arrived in 1952 we had proper kit, so that was a big, big plus. I had a big parka coat and there were fleeces, proper boots, muffs, hats and gloves."

Korea was also a land of contrasts, where the seasons could be both hostile and inviting.

"The summer is delightful, and Korea is a beautiful place. In the summer and spring there are flowers and shrubs, and it was very pleasant 'shirts off' weather, but the winter is pretty brutal."

The harsh conditions on the front line meant that soldiers were frequently rotated. "It was pretty unpleasant living on the front line. You can't move, you're eating from rations and you're sleeping in your uniform all the time with boots on. So the OP rotated quite frequently so you could come back for a shower and a beer." As the troop officer, Parritt would spend long hours in the front line until he was replaced by the gun position officer (lieutenant). "The two officers who were in the gun lines would be 'one on, one off' so you would do 12 hours on the line and 12 hours off. But when there was a lot of firing going on you would both be on with your gunners, who would be in the command post with you."

Despite the harsh conditions and gruelling hours Parritt was glad to have the professional opportunity of active service. "It was cold but I was doing what a young officer in the artillery would hope to do. You had four guns. You were either at the gun end controlling or ordering the fire of the guns or you had more excitement sitting in the OP looking over the Chinese lines. So it seemed a natural progression for a young regular officer." Life at the Hook was arduous but rewarding, but the biggest test was still to

come, just as an armistice with the communist forces was being negotiated.

THIRD BATTLE OF THE HOOK

Between 28-29 May 1953, Baker Troop was involved in heavy fighting at what became known as the Battle of the Hook. The battle was in fact the third major engagement at the position, but it was the most intense. Men of First Battalion, Duke of Wellington's Regiment defended the Hook with other British infantry, along with American and Turkish units, as well as artillery support, including Baker Troop. Facing them were at least 6,500 Chinese soldiers. The Chinese deliberately decided to attack while peace negotiations were underway in order to gain a tactical, and possibly diplomatic, advantage. Parritt explains: "This was a period where, although the peace talks were going on, the Chinese and ourselves in various places on the front wanted to get better tactical positions if fighting started again."

On this particular occasion the Chinese were aiming to strengthen their negotiating hand with a powerful show of military force at the Hook. "It wasn't a strategic battle and there was no 'breakthrough' or anything, but there were certain areas that were vulnerable. The Chinese had decided that the Hook was a place they'd like to occupy for the tactical advantage of it, so they threw in attacks to take it."

"IT WAS PRETTY UNPLEASANT LIVING ON THE FRONT LINE. YOU CAN'T MOVE, YOU'RE EATING FROM RATIONS AND YOU'RE SLEEPING IN YOUR UNIFORM ALL THE TIME WITH BOOTS ON"

■ Baker Troop performing a quick manoeuvre to support a nearby South Korean division



■ Above: Lieutenant Mervyn Ryder briefing his platoon before a standing patrol for the attack on the 'Warsaw Caves'

■ Right: Men of the First Battalion, Duke of Wellington's Regiment have a smoke before joining a patrol into No-Man's-Land at the Hook. The Dukes' bravery during the battle became famous



"FACING THEM WERE AT LEAST 6,500 CHINESE SOLDIERS. THE CHINESE DELIBERATELY DECIDED TO ATTACK WHILE PEACE NEGOTIATIONS WERE UNDERWAY"





"IT WAS TOTALLY SHELL-POCKED AND BARREN AND THERE WERE NO TREES BECAUSE THEY HAD ALL BEEN BLOWN DOWN. IT WAS JUST A BLEAK LANDSCAPE THAT WAS SIMILAR TO PICTURES OF THE SOMME"

■ Brian Parritt giving fire orders to Baker Troop from the UN Thai Battalion after the death of Captain Bill Miller



The UN forces were lucky, as they were able to prepare for battle with information provided by a captured Chinese soldier. "The colonel came round on the day and said, 'It's going to happen' because they picked up a prisoner who was brilliant. He knew everything about where he was going and what his signals were. It was far more than a British soldier would know, but he didn't know the timing. Therefore, there were all the intelligence indicators that it was going to happen, but it was just a question of when."

When the battle finally began on 28 May, Baker Troop was ready and deployed a much greater rate of fire than usual. "When the Chinese attacked that night I was at the gun end and a lot of the ammunition was rationed. Generally speaking, each target was given three rounds of gunfire, which was the standard. If an attack went on, there would be repeat fire, but the basic was three rounds. On that night it was, 'Three rounds, Fire! Three rounds, Fire! Repeat, Fire!'"

Parritt recalled the professional satisfaction he got from repeated gunfire: "From a gunner's point of view it was wonderful, it was a constant, 'Bang! Bang! Bang!' Baker Four gun fired about 600 rounds plus during the battle. The gun barrels became red-hot and the RASC [Royal Army Service Corps] was splendid bringing up more ammunition."

Baker Troop's guns became so hot during the battle that an amusing but dangerous accident occurred. "A friend of mine from the RASC jumped out of his cab and saw a red-hot barrel. He took out his green army towel, dipped it in water and threw it over the barrel to cool it down, which was a nice thing to do. The trouble was the towel burst into flames! Several weeks later we invited him up to the mess and gave him a new towel and a bottle of sherry!"

Despite the successful firing from the artillery there was tragedy when the Chinese briefly broke through the UN lines. "It was a gunner's dream, but we lost two of our guys from 45 Battery. The Chinese came in just like World War I with hand-to-hand combat,



■ Above: Baker Troop's Mobile Command Post. Nicknamed the 'Gin Palace', the vehicle had a Chinese mortar round hanging in front of the engine grill

grenades and machine guns. We found them [the gunners] with wounds in their back because they had been doing what gunners should be doing, which was looking out of the slit directing fire."

During the night of 28-29 May, 20th Field Regiment fired 13,609 rounds, including almost 2,000 from Baker Troop. Nevertheless, Parritt's own battle took him away from the guns in a daring attack on enemy caves.

THE WARSAW CAVES

Because of the intensity of the UN gunfire, the Chinese infantry faced a barrage of extreme danger. "To attack up the Hook from their own position the Chinese were exposed and

terribly vulnerable. We were firing 'VT' shells that were exploding in the air and splattering down splinters, which were devastating if you were in the open."

To counter this problem the Chinese found a way for their infantry to evade the guns. "The Chinese, who were clever, decided to reduce the distance between when they got out of their trenches and reaching our wire. They were building a series of caves every night much closer to our front line. This was so that when they did attack their vulnerable distance was much reduced. Photographs showed them digging these caves, but they were on the reverse slope so our shells would go over the top. Even our mortars wouldn't do and they were also protected from air attack."

Known as 'Warsaw' after a feature on the Hook, the Chinese caves were a significant threat to the UN positions that could not be ignored. "It was decided to send a company of First Battalion, King's Regiment to attack at night. We would go out along the Samichon with sappers to blow up the caves. This was to prevent them being used for attack purposes."

Parritt was selected as the forward observation officer for the attack company, and he practiced a fire plan and target registration the afternoon before the attack. He also selected men to accompany him. "I picked the two gunners who would come with me and rehearsed what we were going to do. Unlike communications nowadays, the wireless set was a great heavy thing with big batteries. I had a coaxial between my microphone to the gunner who was carrying the radio and batteries, while the other guy was carrying reserve batteries. When we were ready we went up to the fighting patrol and the attack started."

"WE WERE FIRING 'VT' SHELLS THAT WERE EXPLODING IN THE AIR AND SPLATTERING DOWN SPLINTERS, WHICH WERE DEVASTATING IF YOU WERE IN THE OPEN"

ORDNANCE QF 25-POUNDER

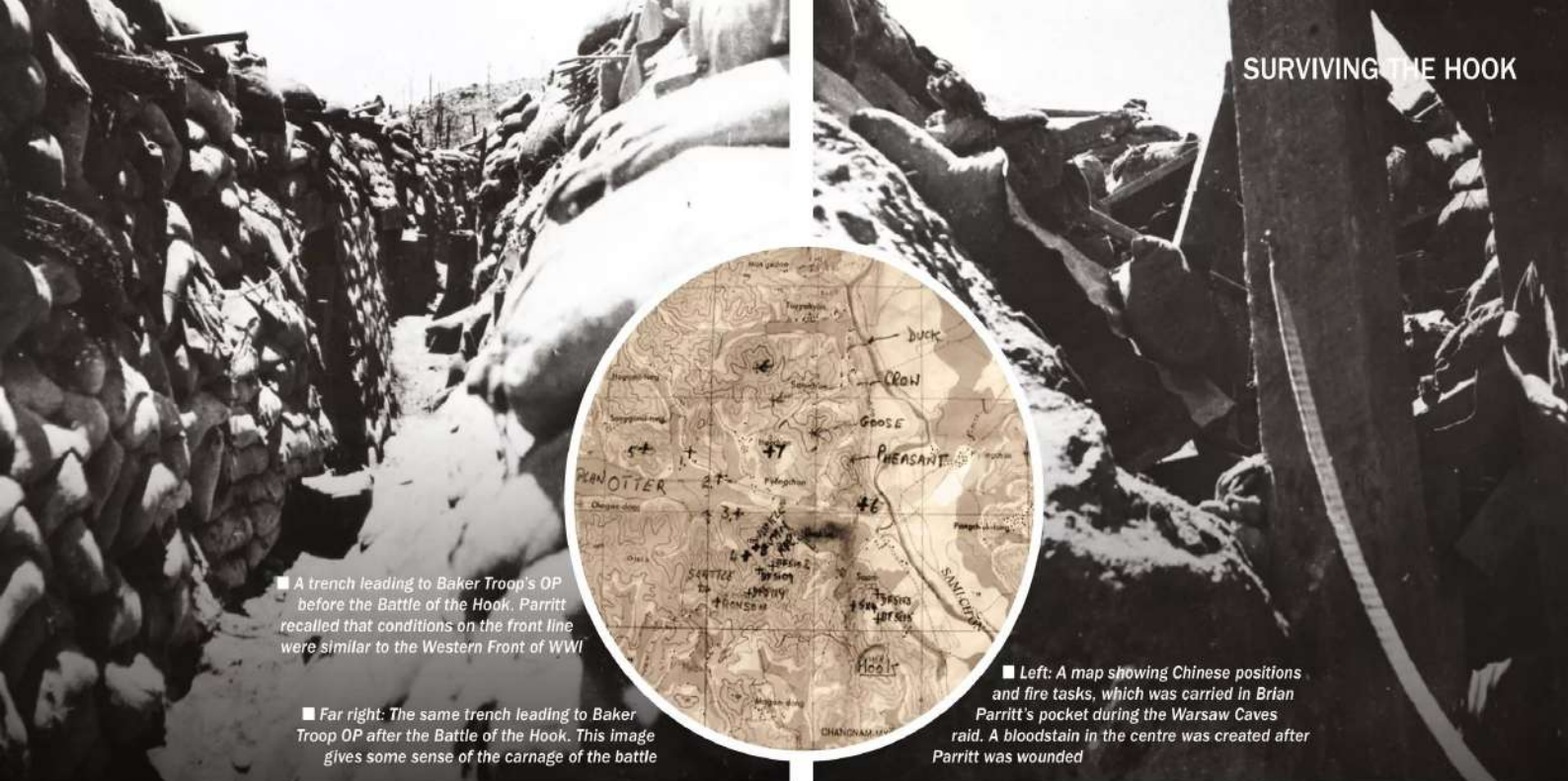
The guns of Baker Troop were hardy and adaptable artillery pieces that were deployed in many conflicts, from World War II to the Iraq War

Manufactured by the Royal Ordnance Factory, the QF 25-pounder was a major British artillery piece that combined the dual role of a gun and howitzer. Designed in the 1930s and in service from 1940, the 25-pounder was arguably the most outstanding field piece used by British and Commonwealth forces during World War II. By 1945 over 12,000 had been produced and the gun was known for its durability, easy operation and versatility.

25-pounders could double as an anti-tank gun and be deployed for jungle, airborne or mountain roles. After World War II it saw service in Korea and Malaya among other conflicts and remained the standard British divisional field gun until 1967. It also saw service for many other nations and was in widespread use until at least the mid-1970s and beyond.

■ The Ordnance QF 25-pounder gun required a crew of six to operate it and was so effective that it was still being used by the Kurds in northern Iraq in 2003





■ A trench leading to Baker Troop's OP before the Battle of the Hook. Parritt recalled that conditions on the front line were similar to the Western Front of WWI

■ Far right: The same trench leading to Baker Troop OP after the Battle of the Hook. This image gives some sense of the carnage of the battle

■ Left: A map showing Chinese positions and fire tasks, which was carried in Brian Parritt's pocket during the Warsaw Caves raid. A bloodstain in the centre was created after Parritt was wounded

The night advance towards the caves meant walking through a minefield, a situation that caused a number of casualties, including Parritt. "My role was to stay with the company commander to order the fire, and we successfully got down through our wire. There was a great scare at one moment when a deer ran across out of the darkness, but then someone trod on a jumping mine and the Chinese lights went up with incoming fire. I didn't know it at the time but two or three men were killed and I was knocked over."

Parritt had in fact been wounded in the leg, but at the time he wasn't aware of the true extent of his injury in the dark. "All I knew was being in absolute darkness. I went on with the company commander, and by that time there was a lot of firing and noise. I could feel something wet on my legs, but I really didn't know what had happened."

Following his company commander, Parritt observed the sappers who attacked the caves: "There was a big firefight and they pushed the charges into the caves. We'd got Bren and Sten guns and the Chinese had Burp guns and hand grenades. They successfully blew up the caves and then we pulled back. We walked back carrying stretchers, but the system worked. Fire from my battery commander brought down fire on the hill all around us so there was continuous firing, and the tanks gave us support. It was mission accomplished really."

Although not all of the caves had been destroyed, the British had inflicted heavy casualties, and similar Chinese attacks ended. Parritt was officially commended for bravery for his role during the attack, and the UN artillery fired 37,818 shells and 325 rockets during the battle. However, Parritt credits the courage of the infantry regiments for the UN victory: "The battle achieved success and we kept the hill. The Chinese wanted it, and in the end the ceasefire came and they hadn't got it. That was down to the bravery of the Dukes, Black Watch and King's Regiment and so on."

The 'Dukes' in particular successfully repelled many Chinese attacks, and for every

British soldier killed at the Hook there were 40-50 Chinese casualties. One brigadier later said, "My God, those Dukes were marvellous. In the whole of the last war I never saw anything like that bombardment. But they held the Hook, as I knew they would."

Parritt was transported to a Norwegian-run hospital at Uijeongbu and recalled that it was similar to a famous film and television series: "It was absolutely similar to *M*A*S*H*. When I see it I think, 'Yeah, that's it', but I certainly never met Hot Lips!"

Although he was hospitalised for almost a month, Parritt considered himself luckier than most: "It was a salutary lesson that it's not all glory when you're seeing other wounded chaps. I was lightly wounded compared to all the others there. There was a young officer opposite to me from the Dukes and he'd been hit. The shrapnel had gone through one cheek, missed his tongue and exited through the other cheek. He wasn't a happy bunny, but I remember a nurse saying to him, 'You're lucky. You're going to have wonderful dimples and the girls will love you!'"

THE UN VS TWO SOLDIERS

After his convalescence, Parritt returned to Baker Troop on 29 June 1953 to a situation that was "much the same. We were continuing the static warfare. There was patrolling, Chinese probing, and we did fighting and standing patrols."

"MY GOD, THOSE DUKES WERE MARVELLOUS. IN THE WHOLE OF THE LAST WAR I NEVER SAW ANYTHING LIKE THAT BOMBARDMENT. BUT THEY HELD THE HOOK"

Ceasefire talks between the UN and North Korea and China were now at an advanced stage, but the fighting remained heavy along the front line, including at the Hook. Baker Troop was told that armistice talks had been concluded, but on the same day Parritt inadvertently started a truly extraordinary artillery incident. He recalls: "I was in the OP looking down into the Samichon and saw two Chinese guys with white hats laying lines. It was a quiet day, but the war was still going on and I thought, 'Well, why not?' and ordered three rounds of gunfire from the troop. I said, 'Troop target' from our four guns, but to my surprise the commander said over the air, 'Battery target authorised.'"

Parritt's ammunition was often of a poor quality and he did not want shells to fall short on British infantry, but his commanders kept increasing the number of guns on the two Chinese soldiers. "The adjutant then came on the phone and said, 'Regimental target authorised.' This was the 24 regimental guns firing at a target that I had picked. The company commander ran in and said, 'What's going on?' I said, 'I don't know!' I had now added 400 yards [366 metres] beyond the soldiers so the firing was a long way behind them. They were listening to what I had to say, but then I heard, 'Divisional target authorised.' This included the New Zealanders and Americans etc. and I added yet another 400 yards."

A stunned Parritt then received the ultimate order: "There was then a 'Victor target', which meant that every gun in the UN that was able to reach that area was now firing. As a second lieutenant I was firing more guns than had been fired by the British Army since the crossing of the Rhine! All the UN guns were firing on these two soldiers, but it was a mile [1.6 kilometres] beyond them now and the fire erupted all over the Chinese lines."

Parritt was later told that this huge barrage of firepower was "a show of force to demonstrate a determination that the ceasefire wasn't the UN surrendering or giving in, because no one knew whether the Chinese were going to obey it."



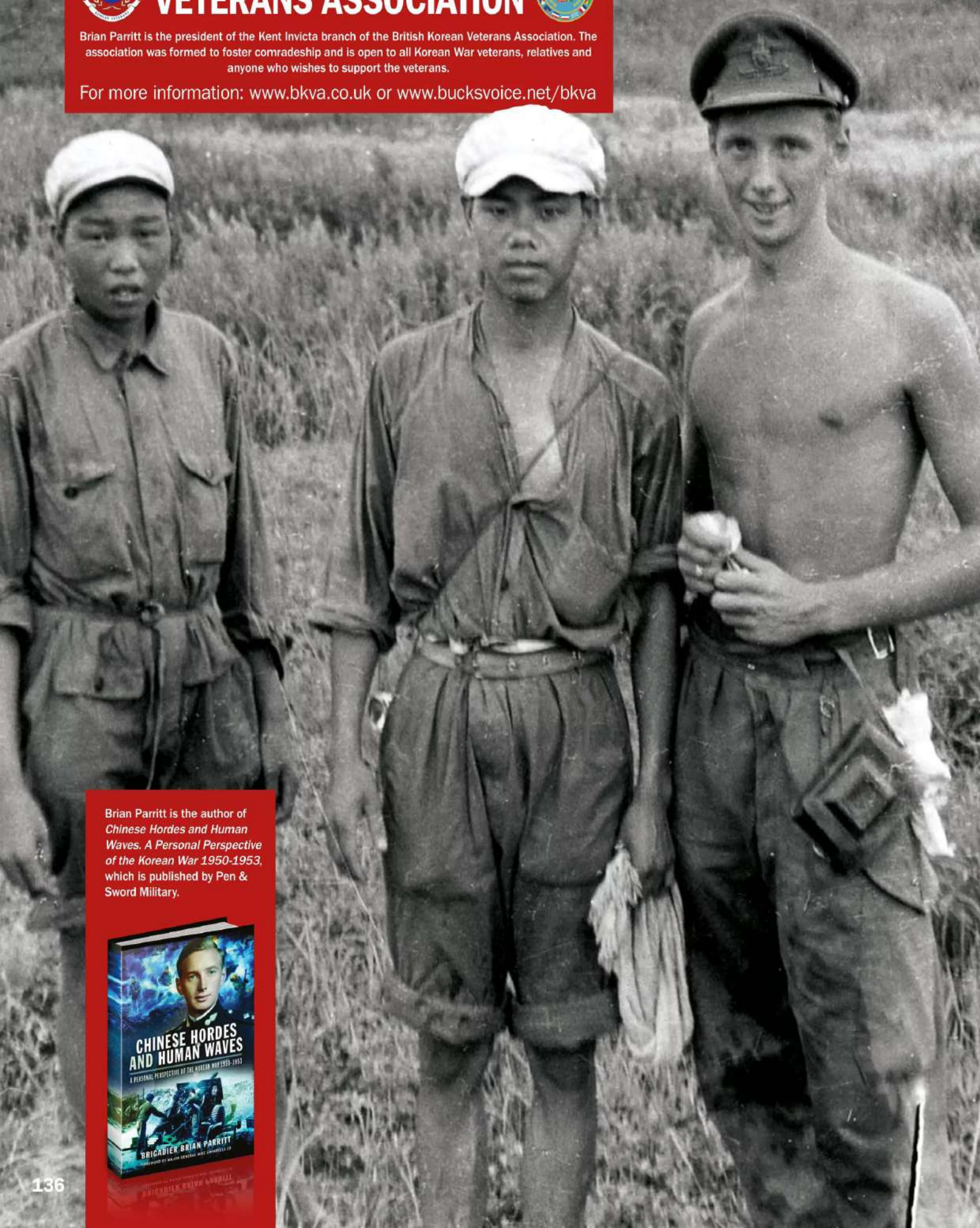
BRITISH KOREAN VETERANS ASSOCIATION



Brian Parritt is the president of the Kent Invicta branch of the British Korean Veterans Association. The association was formed to foster comradeship and is open to all Korean War veterans, relatives and anyone who wishes to support the veterans.

For more information: www.bkva.co.uk or www.bucksvoice.net/bkva

■ Brian Parritt with two Chinese soldiers in No-Man's-Land on the day after the Korean War armistice. He described this remarkable encounter as being "like Christmas 1914... There wasn't any animosity"



Brian Parritt is the author of *Chinese Hordes and Human Waves. A Personal Perspective of the Korean War 1950-1953*, which is published by Pen & Sword Military.





■ Brian Parritt (right) celebrating the armistice with platoon commander Lieutenant Mervyn Ryder on top of Baker Troop OP

■ Baker Troop says farewell to fallen soldiers at the end of the Korean War. Parritt has never forgotten the courage and sacrifice of his comrades

“THE BRUTALITY COMES FROM THE GUYS IN THE BACK WHO HAVE A PERCEPTION ABOUT THE ENEMY, WHEREAS THE CHAP ON THE FRONT LINE THINKS, ‘THEY’RE POOR BUGGERS LIKE US!’”

ARMISTICE

Despite the fact that there was (and remains to this day) no peace treaty, the armistice that ended the Korean War came into effect on 27 July 1953. Parritt recalled that the event was met with trepidation: “It was a very quiet day and the ceasefire was due to start at 10pm. It was totally dark on our front line and what we were looking at was almost satanic. The question all the time was, ‘Do they [the Chinese] know it’s a ceasefire?’”

At 10pm Parritt’s fears seem to be confirmed: “10 o’clock came and there was nothing, but then we heard the thing we hated, which was the ‘Plop, plop’ of their mortars. With their shells you could hear ‘Bang!’ and it would drop, but with a ‘Plop’ it’s in the air and you don’t know where it’s going to land. We heard the ‘Plop’ and thought, ‘Oh bugger, its not going to be a ceasefire.’”

Luckily, everyone’s fears were misplaced and Parritt instead witnessed a poignant moment: “But then the whole thing lit up. The Chinese were firing their flares that were red, yellow and white, so they did know it was a ceasefire. At the same time all our guys in front started firing their flares too. Then there was this most evocative thing. When it all went quiet again the Fusiliers and the King’s began to sing *There Will Always Be An England*. It was quite emotional, and the singing spread along the line before it went quiet again.”

The next day, Parritt and his platoon commander walked into No-Man’s-Land and had a surprise encounter: “We went down into the valley and walked around the bush. Then what do we see? The two Chinese soldiers, the ones that we had been firing at trying to kill! The four of us stopped and we all checked to see that none of us were carrying weapons. They saw that we didn’t have weapons and we saw that they weren’t carrying weapons either so it became cigarettes and smiles!”

Parritt recalled this meeting had moving similarities to a famous event that occurred during World War I: “We were just four ordinary guys, and it was like Christmas 1914. When soldiers meet it’s interesting. Throughout wars you constantly find that when chaps take a prisoner they give them a cigarette 99 per cent of the time. The brutality comes from the guys in the back who have a perception about the enemy, whereas the chap on the front line thinks, ‘They’re poor buggers like us!’ The moral of it is that soldiers don’t start wars, politicians say you’re at war.”

REFLECTIONS, WARNINGS AND REMEMBRANCE

Baker Troop moved back from the front to the Kansas Line and Parritt helped to repatriate UN prisoners. He recalled the PoWs’ happiness when they reached safety: “It was always very emotional. Many were confused and apprehensive because some of them had been prisoners for years. Then suddenly they were free and it was a magic moment for everybody.”

Nevertheless, despite the fact that the Chinese often kept PoWs in horrendous conditions, Parritt held little animosity for them as soldiers. “You have to say that they were brave, and there’s no doubt that they genuinely believed that they were liberating Korea from American occupation. We certainly didn’t see them as inferior to us in any way, they were just as dangerous.”

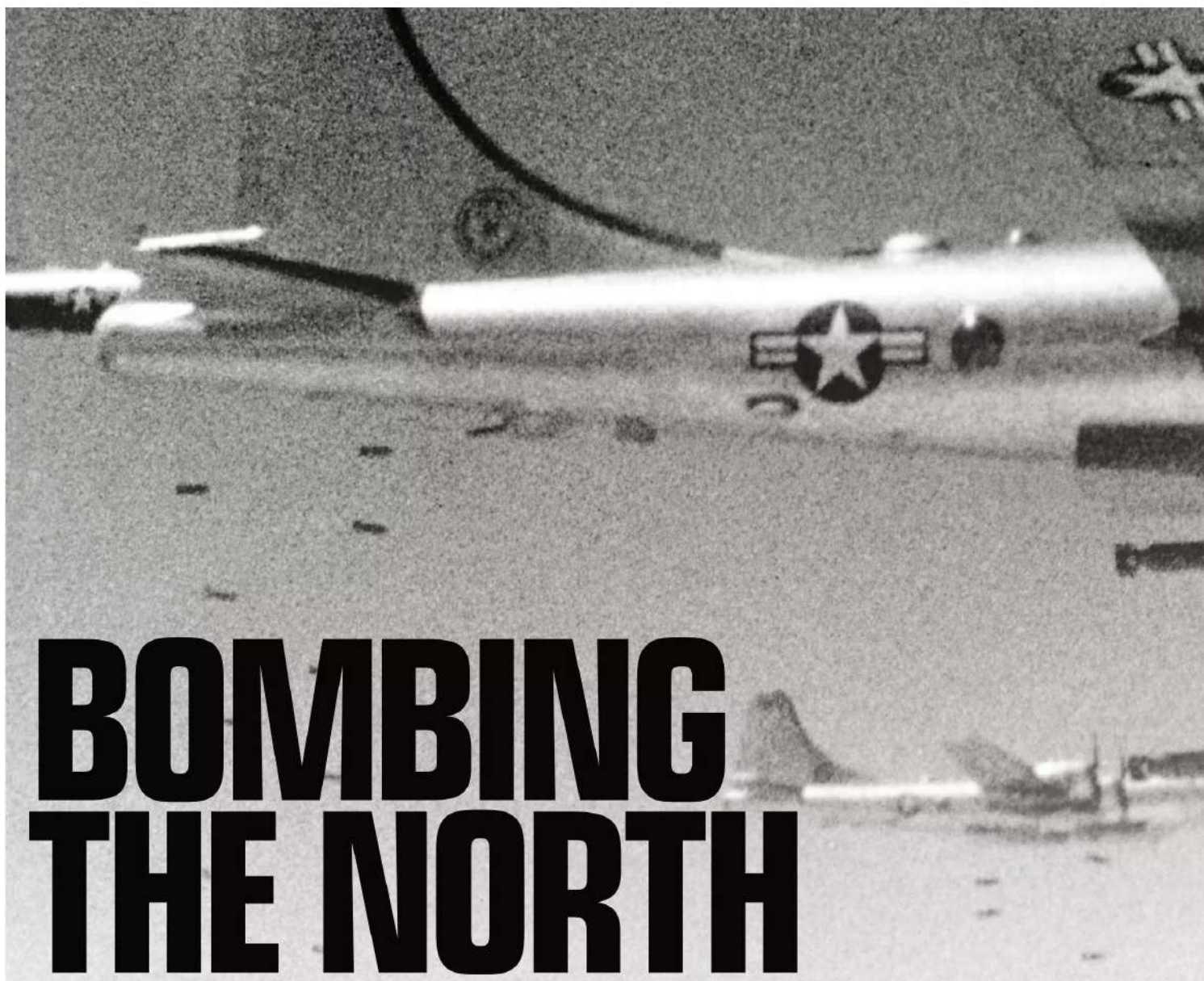
Although the armistice ended hostilities, Parritt witnessed the conflict’s ambiguous result: “When I drove down to Uijeongbu at the end of the war with a Korean driver there was a demonstration, and I asked the driver what it was about. He said, ‘They’re protesting about the end of the war because you’ll be going home and they’re left with a divided country.’ So it’s hard to say who won or lost the war because it remains how it was. If you look at

it strategically, each side can claim they won. The Chinese would say they won and we would certainly say that we liberated the south so we won.”

At the time, and for decades afterwards, the Korean War received surprisingly little attention. Parritt explained, “I think it’s because it came so soon after World War II. There was still rationing and there were great privations. There just wasn’t a mood of celebration about another war.”

Nevertheless, in recent times tension on the Korean Peninsula has dramatically escalated thanks to the nuclear ambitions of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un and the unpredictable and changeable reactions of US President Donald Trump. However, Parritt believes that war will not happen except through human error: “I think it will pan out unless there is an accident. It’s a dangerous situation, but I don’t think Kim Jong-un is planning to nuke Los Angeles. It’s like the stalemate in the Cold War. However, if you play with petrol, somebody might light the match.”

Many of the 60,000 British troops who fought in Korea were national servicemen, and in total over 1,100 of those soldiers were killed and 2,600 of them were wounded, some extremely seriously. For Brigadier Brian Parritt, it is their sacrifice and courage that he remembers and often thinks about in relation to the conflict: “Now... I can’t help thinking that those men were 19-20 and look what they lost. I know people say this but I feel it. They lost their whole life, their children, wives, everything. People should remember their sacrifice. These were national servicemen; they didn’t volunteer to be in the army. If you’re a regular then you do volunteer for these things, but they were boys out of school who were told to report to go to a war. They were given a few weeks of training and then sent off to Korea, but to them where was Korea? Why were they going? It’s a tribute to them and the way they fought.”



BOMBING THE NORTH

THE HISTORIC BELLIGERENCE OF THE NORTH KOREAN REGIME IS AT LEAST PARTLY EXPLAINED BY MEMORIES OF A SAVAGE AND REMORSELESS BOMBING CAMPAIGN, WHERE THE USE OF ATOMIC WEAPONS WAS CONSIDERED

When the regime of Kim Jong-un issued threats against the United States territory of Guam in 2017, few observers noted that the first B-29 bombers that bombed Korean targets took off from Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, just a few days after Kim's grandfather sent his armies into the south in June 1950.

North Korea was devastated by the US Air Force campaign. The head of the Strategic Air Command (SAC), General Curtis LeMay, claimed that American bombing killed 20 per cent of the North's population and left not a single village unscathed. Western media seldom reported the bombings: accounts of the air war focused on the high-altitude duels between Soviet-built MiG-15s and American

F-86 jets in the so-called 'MiG Alley' near the Chinese border. Yet on 29 August 1952 the North's capital Pyongyang endured over 1,400 sorties in one night alone.

Initially the Supreme Commander of UN forces General Douglas MacArthur was under instructions to limit targets north of the 38th parallel dividing the Koreas, lest the Chinese or Soviets step up their aid to the North. The first B-29s, accompanied by P-51 Mustangs and Lockheed P-80 jets, were barely threatened by the North's propeller-driven Yakovlev and Sturmovik planes or by ground fire. Flying from the Japanese bases of Yokota and Kadena, they escorted UN forces north towards the Yalu River before the Chinese intervention caused the Korean conflict to escalate further.

After 200,000 Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) troops intervened on the side of the North in October, the scale of the bombings was vastly increased and included the use of incendiary devices. B-29 bombers typically carried 39,500-pound bomb loads with delayed action fuses and one magnesium flare designed to illuminate a target area for bombardiers bringing up the rear. Bombing missions by B-29s were augmented by Douglas B-26 Invaders flying at lower levels. As early as November, these missions had wreaked sufficient destruction for the North Korean leadership to instruct the population to build dug outs and underground schools. That same month MacArthur even sent two bomber groups, the 22nd and 92nd, back to the US. But by 1951 the US Air Force had largely run

■ B-29 Superfortresses were capable of carrying large payloads and travelling huge distances. They could also be modified to carry atomic weapons

"AS THE PLA ADVANCED SOUTH, TRUMAN GAVE A PRESS CONFERENCE AND STATED THAT HIS ADMINISTRATION WOULD CONSIDER ANY STEPS NECESSARY TO WIN IN KOREA, INCLUDING THE USE OF ATOMIC WEAPONS"

out of urban targets and turned to irrigation and hydroelectric dams. These bombings would inflict another kind of misery: flooding farmland and causing starvation among an already brutalised population. In June 1953 American aircraft bombed the irrigation dams of the North's Toksan Reservoir, flooding villages and farms. Similar actions by the Nazis in the Netherlands in World War II had been considered a war crime.

For all the devastation wrought by conventional weaponry, the shadow of the atomic bomb loomed across the Korean battlefield. At the outset of the invasion, the United States had nearly 300 Mark-4 plutonium weapons in its stockpile, and while the Soviets had tested a similar weapon in 1949, it would be two years before they conducted a test drop. In July 1950 LeMay was ordered by President Harry Truman to move B-29s to England, to be capable of hitting Soviet targets. Weeks later the first of 20 nuclear-capable B-29s were sent to Guam. By November, as the PLA advanced south, Truman gave a press conference and stated that his administration would consider any steps necessary to win in Korea, including the use of atomic weapons.

In April 1951 he authorised nine devices to be transferred to atomic-capable B-29s



at Kadena Base, Okinawa. Although the SAC set up a command and control centre in Tokyo, the aircraft were removed by June. Nevertheless, the 'Hudson Harbour' operations took place in October – 'dummy run' missions against potential targets.

By this time the war was largely stalemated on the ground, but it is uncertain if the atomic option would have changed the course of the war. Communist forces were widely dispersed and relied on a primitive infrastructure,

and the destructive strength of the bombs available at the time was limited. But even without their use, the air war proved a calamity for Korea's civilian population. Like the bombing of German and Japanese cities a few years earlier, a key objective was destroying the enemy population's morale. Ultimately the North Korean state survived. Memories of the merciless nature of the aerial campaign have, in part, guided its leaders ever since, endangering the region even today.

LONG ROAD TO LASTING PEACE

RELATIONS BETWEEN NORTH KOREA, SOUTH KOREA AND THE REST OF THE WORLD HAVE RUN THE GAMUT OF HOSTILITIES AND ATTEMPTS AT RECONCILIATION FOR NEARLY 70 YEARS

WORDS MIKE HASKEW

The turbulent relations between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Republic of Korea, and the wider international community have ebbed and flowed for well over half a century. The seeds of enmity were sown during and after World War II, and at times the tensions have erupted in armed conflict. Recently, amid the rhetoric of world leaders and the ensuing diplomatic manoeuvring, a glimmer of hope for normalised relations may perhaps lead to lasting peace.

The Korean people have endured a history of struggle and subjugation. During the 20th century, Korea was subject to Japanese rule for 35 years, which ended only with Japan's surrender at the end of World War II. The Japanese exploitation of Korea remains a vivid reminder of the potential hardship engendered by foreign influence. With the end of the war, the Korean Peninsula was divided along the 38th parallel with zones of administration north and south under the sway of the Soviet Union and the United States respectively.

When negotiations to unify Korea as a single nation failed, two governments were established. By 1948, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (the DPRK, or North Korea), a communist regime and client state of the Soviet Union, was founded in the north, while the United States backed the establishment of a pro-Western democracy, the Republic of Korea (the ROK, or South Korea), in the south. Continuing unrest and mistrust on both sides erupted in armed conflict on 25 June 1950, when North Korean forces invaded the South in an effort to unify the peninsula. The three-year hostilities of the Korean War followed; North Korea backed by the Soviet Union and China, its powerful communist neighbour, and South Korea supported by the combined forces of the United Nations, which sent troops to repel the invaders after its Security Council, with the Soviet Union using its power to boycott the proceedings, labelled the North Koreans as the aggressors in the conflict.

Since the armistice that halted the combative phase of the Korean War in 1953, relations between the principal adversaries have ranged from stone-cold silence to espionage, efforts to destabilise one government or the other, economic sanctions, border incidents, defections, provocative military exercises, sabre-rattling, and nuclear brinksmanship.

For North Korea, mistrust of the Americans and their principal allies in Asia is grounded in the memories of war, hardship and occupation. The Kim dynasty, now with third-generation leader Kim Jong-un directing foreign policy, holds a firm grip on the people, regulating virtually every aspect of daily living in the 'hermit kingdom'. Propaganda efforts continue to remind North Koreans of the harsh exploitation they endured under the Japanese, including slave labour, 'comfort women' forced into lives of sex slavery, heinous medical experiments, and frequent executions. Furthermore, although the US armed forces operated under the UN banner during the Korean War, they remember the horrific bombing of their cities during the 1950-1953 conflict by the American aircraft that dropped 635,000 tons of ordnance on North Korea, exceeding the total expended against Japan in all of World War II. Many North Koreans today are firmly convinced that the US action constituted a war crime.

From the South Korean perspective, the division of the peninsula in the mid-20th century fractured families, fostered mistrust and hostility, and inflicted communist repression on millions of people. Their economic resurgence after World War II, along with that of Japan, has been perceived by much of the world as indicative of South Korea's industriousness and commitment to prosperity and a high standard of living for its people. US support has facilitated that economic recovery but also caused the DPRK to see the ROK as a puppet of its Western benefactor, while they perceive Japan as a continuing threat to the survival of the Kim dynasty and the nation.



POLITICALLY MOTIVATED ASSASSINATION ATTEMPTS

Since the end of the Korean War, North Korea or its expatriate sympathisers have dispatched agents or hit squads with the mission of assassinating high-ranking South Korean officials, including sitting presidents. Although the main targets have eluded the assassins, a number of people have died.

In January 1968, a team of 31 North Korean operatives infiltrated South Korea and advanced close to the Blue House, the residence/office complex of President Park Chung Hee in Seoul. South Korean police intercepted the hit squad. 29 North Koreans were killed, and another committed suicide. The lone survivor admitted that the squad's mission was assassinating Park and other members of his government. Two South Korean police officers and five civilians were also killed.

In August 1974, a member of a pro-North Korean group in Japan entered South Korea and fired several shots at President Park in Seoul. The president was not injured, but First Lady Yuk Young Soo was fatally wounded and died hours later. The would-be assassin, Mun Se Gwang, was executed.

South Korean President Chun Doo Hwan traveled to Burma (Myanmar) in October 1983, and while ceremonies were underway at a shrine in the city of Rangoon (Yangon) a bomb exploded. 17 senior members of the South Korean government were killed in the blast, including Chun's chief of staff and the South Korean ambassador to the country. Four Burmese dignitaries died, and 32 people were wounded. Two suspects, identified as officers in the North Korean Army, were sentenced to death, while Kim Il-sung called the assertion of his government's involvement "a preposterous slander."



■ South Korean security agents carry away Mun Se-gwang following his 1974 attempt to assassinate President Park Chung-hee. The first lady of South Korea was killed

Images: Getty



■ Ex-NBA star Dennis Rodman plays with North Korean and US players during an exhibition basketball game in Pyongyang to celebrate Kim's birthday in 2014

AN UNLIKELY FRIENDSHIP

During the last few years, even as diplomatic relations between North Korea and the United States remained frosty, an unlikely friendship has developed between North Korean leader Kim Jong-un and former National Basketball Association (NBA) star Dennis Rodman, whose flamboyant lifestyle has often garnered headlines in the US.

Rodman has visited Kim in North Korea on several occasions and once put together an 'all-star' basketball team that played exhibition games in the capital city of Pyongyang. The two public figures have forged a friendship that has led some to speculate that it might have influenced Kim's eventual decision to pursue better relations with the US, South Korea, and even ancient enemy Japan.

Rodman appeared on the CBS television program *The Late Show* with Stephen Colbert in December 2017, and when Colbert asked about the special relationship, the former NBA star responded, "Well, for some reason, he likes me. I'm being honest, he likes me. I think the fact that people don't really understand the fact if you actually go over there and meet him – obviously, you don't see him talk on TV – but for some reason, he trusts me. And when I went over there, the first thing he said to me, he said, 'Mr Rodman, we just want to know, can we trust you?' I said, 'Absolutely.'"

When Colbert asked what topics the two discussed, Rodman replied, "Actually, we talk about basketball."

KOREA'S MODERN MILESTONES

NORTH KOREAN COMMUNIST PARTY ESTABLISHED

The Workers' Party of Korea is established in 1925 with Kim Yong Bom as its first president. In 1945 the Soviets orchestrate a new leader in the shape of Kim Il-sung, who has returned to Korea from more than 25 years of exile.

13 OCTOBER 1945

REPUBLIC OF KOREA PROCLAIMED

Three years after the administrative partitioning of the Korean Peninsula, the Republic of Korea is established. Its claim as the legitimate government of Korea is challenged by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the north.

15 AUGUST 1948

SEIZURE OF PUEBLO

North Korean forces seize the US Navy intelligence ship *Pueblo* in international waters. One American is killed. The remaining crewmen are held in North Korea for months. The captives are eventually released, but the ship is not returned.

23 JANUARY 1968

RAID FOILED

North Korea mounts an ambitious commando raid against the South, landing 130 seaborne special operations troops on the eastern coast near the villages of Ulchin and Samchok. The raid fails as 110 North Koreans are killed and seven captured.

1 OCTOBER 1968



■ The DPRK flag flying over the historic location of Panmunjom where the armistice ending the active military phase of the Korean War was concluded

"WHEN NEGOTIATIONS TO UNIFY KOREA AS A SINGLE NATION FAILED, TWO GOVERNMENTS WERE ESTABLISHED"

For well over half a century, the two Koreas have been separated by a four-kilometre (2.5-mile) strip of ground called the Demilitarised Zone, or DMZ. Loudspeakers have blared propaganda across it in both directions. Watchful guards glare at one another from across the borders, particularly at the site of the 1950s peace negotiations at Panmunjom, where their proximity to each other is as close as crossing a painted line or walking through a conference room door. The United States has maintained a military presence in the ROK for decades, the number typically totalling around 30,000 combat troops and support

personnel. These soldiers bolster the South Korean armed forces and act essentially as a tripwire in the event of a North Korean invasion. In sharp contrast, the DPRK maintains one of the largest standing armies and reserve military components in the world. With more than a million personnel under arms, its commitment to battle would be, at least initially, catastrophic for forces confronted south of the DMZ.

Both sides train artillery on targets across the Demilitarised Zone, and the threat of destruction is an aspect of daily living in the South Korean capital of Seoul, just over 56 kilometres (35 miles) from the DMZ. While the



DEFINING MOMENT

KOREAN WAR ERUPTS

25 JUNE 1950

North Korean troops cross the 38th parallel and invade South Korea, signalling the effort of the communist country to unify the Korean Peninsula by force. Subsequently, a United Nations resolution authorises military intervention on behalf of South Korea. The ensuing Korean War drags on for three years before an uneasy armistice is signed between the United Nations, North Korean, and Chinese representatives. South Korea is not a signatory, and technically the two Koreas remain at war. More than 4.5 million military personnel and civilians are estimated to have lost their lives before the armistice is concluded on 27 July 1953.

Korean War is seen by some historians as the real beginning of the half-century Cold War that shaped the global political landscape, Korea has been the scene of ongoing efforts by both sides to destabilise or precipitate the downfall of the other. Although each side has professed as its primary goal the reunification of the peninsula, discussions toward that end have been halting at best until recently.

In the wake of the Korean War, agents of the DPRK have attempted to assassinate South Korean presidents and landed infiltrators to attack civilians and military personnel in South Korea. In 1968, North Korea seized the American intelligence ship *Pueblo*, imprisoning its crew for months. More recently, a South Korean Navy corvette was torpedoed and sunk – probably by a North Korean submarine. North Korean artillery has fired on an inhabited island off the South Korean coast. News reports assert that Kim Jong-un has ruthlessly eliminated opposition to his rule, executing officials and even brutally murdering family members – most notably his half-brother Kim Jong-nam, who was mysteriously assassinated at a Malaysian airport using VX nerve agent. The North Koreans, however, continue to point to international efforts to undermine the Kim regime and accuse South Korea, the US and Japan of their own clandestine operations, for which they say they are frequently blamed.

President George W Bush labelled the DPRK, Iraq (under Saddam Hussein), and Iran as an “axis of evil” in his 2002 State of the Union Address, and North Korea has long been the target of rounds of economic sanctions imposed by the UN or the US directly. United States diplomats have referred to the DPRK as a state sponsor of terrorism. Meanwhile, the DPRK has accused the US of interfering in a civil war that didn’t concern it, of having imperialist aims in Asia and of deliberately

ramping up tensions between North and South Korea for its own ends.

Most recently, tension between the two sides escalated appreciably following a series of North Korean tests involving its nuclear weapons program and advancing missile technology. The North Korean announcement that its nuclear weapons are capable of reaching American cities and its test-firing of ordnance that violated Japanese airspace have pushed the adversaries closer to war perhaps than any other time since the 1950s.

Remarkably, a flurry of diplomatic activity has seen both sides step back somewhat from the fiery bombast that seemed to signal imminent armed hostilities. In the spring of 2018, Kim Jong-un and South Korean President Moon Jae-in met for two hours at the DMZ, embracing and symbolically stepping into each other’s country. The meeting marked a significant advance

toward improved relations and possible future reunification of the Korean Peninsula.

Concurrently, Kim Jong-un and US President Donald Trump began discussing a summit. The road was rocky, and Trump actually cancelled a proposed meeting following an exchange of accusatory communiqués. Still, diplomacy won out, and the leaders met in Singapore in June 2018, issuing a joint statement afterward that pledged to work toward denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula and other beneficial arrangements.

To date, negotiations are ongoing, and an occasional politically charged statement threatens to derail the progress that has been achieved. The world watches, just as it has for decades. The hope remains that this adversarial relic of the Cold War may finally be laid to rest, and that Korea can finally take steps towards self-governed unity.

“THE TWO KOREAS HAVE BEEN SEPARATED BY A FOUR-KILOMETRE (2.5-MILE) STRIP OF GROUND CALLED THE DEMILITARISED ZONE”



DEFINING MOMENT

KIM JONG-IL DESIGNATED AS SUCCESSOR FEBRUARY 1974

Kim Il-sung, leader of North Korea since the 1940s and the establishment of the DPRK as a client state of the Soviet Union, names his eldest son, Kim Jong-il as his future successor. The central committee of the Korean Workers’ Party has already recognised Kim Jong-il as the Kim Dynasty’s second generation leader. Kim Il-sung dies in 1994 after nearly half a century in power, and Kim Jong-il becomes the undisputed leader of the DPRK until his own death in 2011. In turn, his son Kim Jong-un becomes leader of North Korea, a position that he holds today.

DEFINING MOMENT

NORTH KOREA’S THIRD NUCLEAR TEST 12 FEBRUARY 2013

After claiming it possesses missiles that are capable of striking the United States, North Korea conducts its third nuclear test in seven years and announces it will restart all of its facilities at the Yongbyon complex.

DEFINING MOMENT

SINGAPORE SUMMIT 12 JUNE 2018

After months of rhetoric, accusations on both sides and the strengthening of economic sanctions against North Korea, DPRK leader Kim Jong-un and US President Donald Trump meet in Singapore to begin dialogue aimed at improving relations between the two nations, and the denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula. The leaders issue a joint statement outlining preliminary agreements, including the return of the remains of US service members killed in the Korean War. Kim has already met with South Korean President Moon Jae-in, and discussions surrounding the reunification of Korea emerge once again. The diplomatic process is ongoing.

JOINT REUNIFICATION STATEMENT

High-level representatives of the DPRK and ROK meet at Pyongyang and exchange views on reunification of the Korean Peninsula. A joint statement listing points of agreement is issued, but Korea remains divided to this day.

● 4 JULY 1972

YONGBYON NUCLEAR FACILITY BECOMES OPERATIONAL

North Korea’s major nuclear facility becomes operational after a construction period of five years. Yongbyon, active and shut down on several occasions, is the focal point of worldwide concerns surrounding the nuclear arms ambitions of the DPRK.

● 1986

SIGNING THE AGREED FRAMEWORK

The United States and North Korea sign an Agreed Framework as the DPRK commits to freezing its nuclear development programme in exchange for a pair of light water non-proliferation nuclear reactors and heavy fuel oil.

● 21 OCTOBER 1994

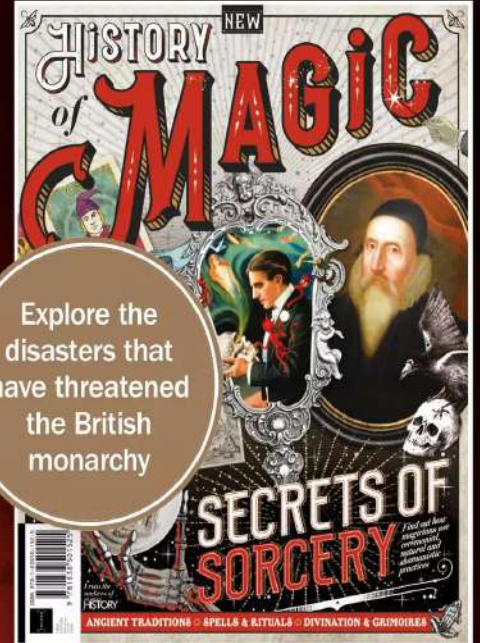
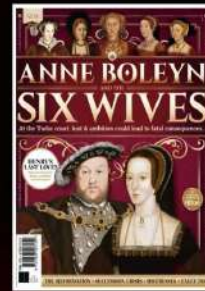
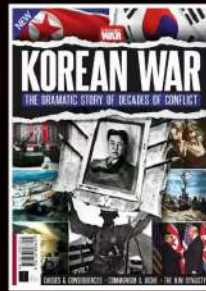
WITHDRAWAL

North Korea announces its withdrawal from the 1968 Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. Covert research and development continues, escalating under Kim Jong-un, who accedes to power in the DPRK in 2011 and embarks on a series of missile tests.

● 10 JANUARY 2003



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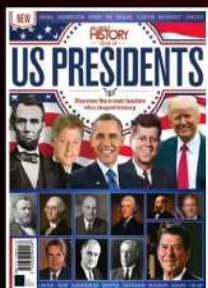
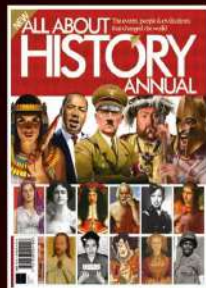
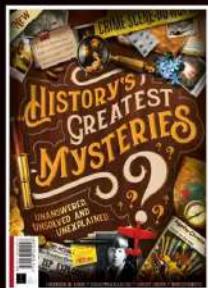
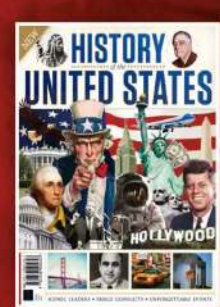
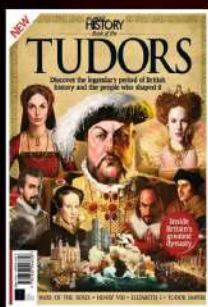


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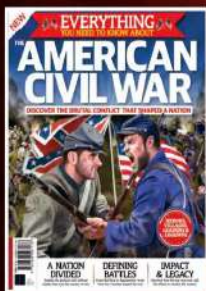
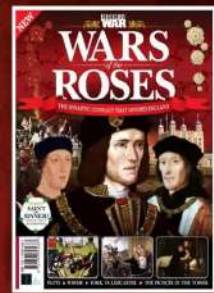
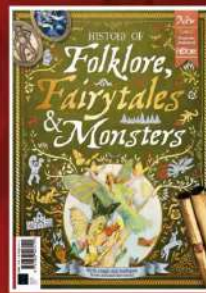
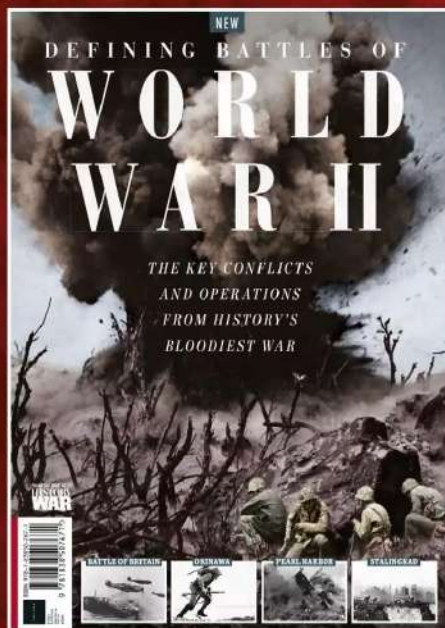
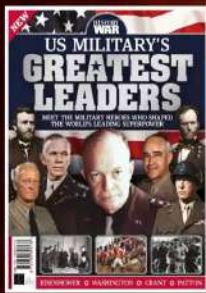
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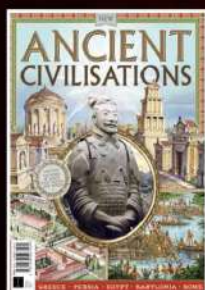
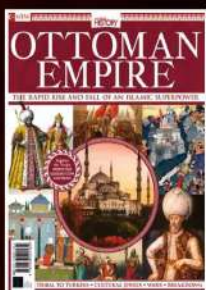
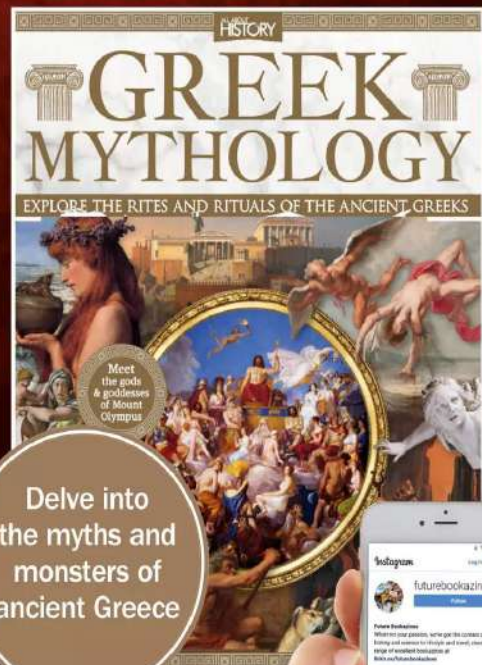
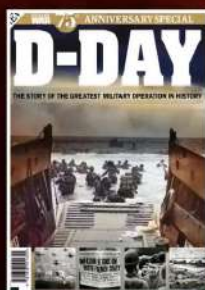


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